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OFFICIALLY, Sir Howard was at first Governor and then Comptroller of the Household to the Duke of Connaught. He was also a devoted servant, wise adviser of, and A.D.C. to Queen Victoria, who constantly consulted him about her private affairs, especially with regard to her family. After his death his widow stored away his correspondence, including about 600 autograph letters of the Queen. Recently these have been made available and by Royal permission form the basis of this book. The Duke of Connaught's upbringing was happier and more successful than that of any of his brothers. That was chiefly due to Sir Howard. We are shown the Duke from a boy onwards—his education, pleasures, travels, visits to foreign courts, manœuvres, State ceremonies and informal family gatherings, with intimate pictures of conditions and customs which have now passed for ever. Woven into all is the life story of a gallant, attractive, wise and artistic English gentleman—Sir Howard himself.

With Illustrations

*The lettering on the front of
this jacket is a reproduction
of Queen Victoria's
own hand*

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THE QUEEN THANKS
SIR HOWARD



THIS BOOK IS PRODUCED
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Sir Howard Elphinstone

THE QUEEN THANKS SIR HOWARD

The Life of Major-General
Sir Howard Elphinstone, V.C., K.C.B., C.M.G.
by his daughter, Mary Howard McClintock

*Il n'y a pas d'autre bonheur pour l'homme que
de donner son plein.*

(Claudé)

John Murray, Albemarle Street, London

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WITH LOVE
TO ALL MY FATHER'S GRANDCHILDREN

First Edition . . . 1945

Made and Printed in Great Britain by Butler & Tanner Ltd., Frome and London

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>		<i>Page</i>
I	OLD LETTERS	I
II	IMPERIAL RUSSIA	7
III	LIVONIA COTTAGE	11
IV	THE CHEERFUL SUBALTERN	16
V	WAR: IN PLAY AND IN EARNEST	20
VI	EARLY DAYS AT COURT	24
VII	WINDSOR AND OSBORNE	33
VIII	THE ELDEST SON	41
IX	THE CLOSE OF A PERIOD	43
X	GRIEF	48
XI	THE UPBRINGING OF A PRINCE	52
XII	A GERMAN FAIRY TALE	60
XIII	THE COBURG SUCCESSION	64
XIV	THE CURE FOR "JOHN BULLISM"	71
XV	H.M.S. "ENCHANTRESS"	76
XVI	COURT APPOINTMENTS	83
XVII	WORK AND PLAY	89
XVIII	TROUBLED DAYS	99
XIX	FAREWELL, GREENWICH	106
XX	NORTH AMERICA	111
XXI	SIX LETTERS	133
XXII	ACCIDENT	137
XXIII	THE RÔLE OF INTERMEDIARY	140
XXIV	EUROPEAN SEARCH	150
XXV	OF CARPETS—QUEENS—AND KINGS	158
XXVI	CONTINENTAL CAPITALS	165
XXVII	ELPHINSTONE'S MARRIAGE	174
XXVIII	ALDERSHOT	178
XXIX	FAMILY LIFE	182

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
XXX IRISH IMPRESSIONS	186
XXXI PRINCE ARTHUR'S ENGAGEMENT	188
XXXII BERLIN, 1879	195
XXXIII PRINCE ARTHUR'S WEDDING	201
XXXIV PRINCE ARTHUR'S WEDDING TOUR	205
XXXV ARCHITECT, ARTIST AND SOLDIER	210
XXXVI THE DUKE'S MILITARY CAREER	220
XXXVII GERMAN FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES	226
XXXVIII ENCHANTED AUTUMN	239
XXXIX THE DEATH OF THE EMPEROR FREDERICK	241
XL INDIAN INTERLUDE	245
XLI THE GARDEN	250
XLII GOVERNMENT HOUSE, DEVONPORT	254
XLIII SERVANTS OF THE CROWN	257
XLIV THE QUEEN'S SORROW	260
XLV THE GARDEN AGAIN	263

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<i>Sir Howard Elphinstone</i>	<i>Frontispiece</i>
<i>The British Soldier in the Crimea in July and December, 1854</i>	<i>facing page 24</i>
<i>From sketches by Sir Howard Elphinstone.</i>	
<i>Prince Arthur with Major Elphinstone</i>	} " " 25
<i>Major Harrison, Prince Arthur, Major Elphinstone</i>	
<i>Rangers House, Greenwich</i>	" " 52
<i>From sketches by Sir Howard Elphinstone.</i>	
<i>The Alpine Castle of Tarasp</i>	" " 53
<i>From a sketch by Sir Howard Elphinstone.</i>	
<i>The Kremlin, Moscow</i>	" " 174
<i>From a sketch by Sir Howard Elphinstone.</i>	
<i>Lady Elphinstone</i>	" " 175
<i>In the Neues Palais, Potsdam</i>	" " 194
<i>From a sketch by Sir Howard Elphinstone, the figure of Sir Howard by the Empress Frederick.</i>	
<i>H.I.M. The Empress Frederick (Victoria Crown Princess and Princess Royal)</i>	" " 195
<i>The Duke and Duchess of Connaught</i>	" " 206
<i>Group at Taormina : Sir Howard and Lady Elphinstone, The Duke and Duchess of Connaught, Sir Alfred Egerton, Lady Egerton</i>	" " 207
<i>H.M. Queen Victoria</i>	" " 212
<i>Bagshot Park</i> }	" " 213
<i>Pinewood</i> }	
<i>From a sketch by Colonel Hart Davis.</i>	
<i>Balmoral, 1886 : Princess Beatrice, Prince Henry of Battenberg, the Duchess of Connaught with Princess Patricia, Queen Victoria with Princess Margaret, Prince Arthur, the Duke of Connaught</i>	" " 224
<i>The Elphinstone Family at Vine Cottage, 1886</i>	" " 225
<i>Court Circular referring to Sir Howard Elphinstone's death</i>	<i>pages 262-3</i>

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

IT is with respectful gratitude that I have received His Majesty's gracious permission to publish not only these letters from the correspondence between Queen Victoria and my father, but also to reproduce Her Majesty's draft for the Court Circular of 14th March 1890, the two sketches of the Ranger's House and other illustrations.

Her Majesty's letters were transcribed in haste in the early summer of 1939, showing her underlining of words but not her abbreviations. Since August 1939 these letters have been in safe keeping at Windsor, but not obtainable for reference or for a further effort to decipher some of her words.

Of Sir Owen Morshead's kindness it is difficult to speak with sufficient gratitude. His unfailing help, constructive criticism and wise counsel made every day spent at the Royal Library at Windsor a period of unforgettable joy. His attitude was echoed by all those about him.

Many other people I would wish to thank: Mr. A. O. Curle for helping to transcribe the Queen's letters; Dr. C. A. Malcolm of the Signet Library for letting me make use of his research in my father's Edinburgh diary; my cousin Kenneth Elphinstone for allowing me to quote from his book on the family; Mrs. Alexander Maitland for hospitality in Western Ross-shire to some irreplaceable documents; Eiluned Lewis for helpful criticism; Sir Cecil Dormer for going carefully through not only the proofs, but also the typescript and giving invaluable advice; to Lady Mary Dormer, Mrs. Scott McComb, and Mrs. Reginald Colquhoun for easing by their hospitality the difficulties of war time research. To my sisters I am grateful for many details and several illustrations.

The book in its early stages owed much to our eldest son, Lieutenant John Leopold Elphinstone McClintock, Royal Navy. One unforgettable spring day in 1939 was spent along the coast road from Portland to Sidmouth and back, during which Livonia Cottage became real to both of us. The book would never had been achieved but for the unfailing encouragement and help of my husband. To Araby Nicholas and Patricia I am indebted for photography and research, interest and laughter.

Last, but not least, would I thank Sir John Murray, who has saved me from many errors and made delightful the final stages of the book.

M. H. Mc.C.

CHAPTER I: OLD LETTERS

SOLDIER and artist, capable and self-effacing, my father, Sir Howard Elphinstone, was for over thirty years Governor, Comptroller and Treasurer to H.R.H. Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught. The appointment was made by the Prince Consort a few years before his death, when the young Prince Arthur was only 8 years of age and Elphinstone himself was only 28. He came of a family who had served the Crown on sea and land for many generations. He had passed brilliantly through his early military training and had won the Victoria Cross at Sebastopol in 1855. He spoke English, French and German with equal ease, being by birth three-quarters Russian and having spent his childhood on the Continent; he was also an excellent musician and painter. Absolute integrity was essential for the post he was to fill; he must be discreet and tactful, a diplomat, schoolmaster and nurse rolled into one. But beyond all this there was one factor he recognised immediately as necessary—without which it would be futile to embark upon the work—could he gain the young Prince's affection? It was upon this foundation of friendship that the structure of the following thirty years was built.

One year was the period first arranged for the duration of the post of governor. At the end of twelve years Elphinstone made an effort to resign; but it was death alone that put an end to the loyal service which he gave to the Queen and her son.

Discretion was one of his qualities that enabled Her Majesty to rely upon Elphinstone more and more as time went on, in her knowledge that intimate matters could be discussed with him with security. She consulted him with growing confidence upon every detail of Prince Arthur's life, and she looked to him for advice. He could grasp quickly the essentials of a case, and he never hesitated, always giving her plain solutions to the many problems with which he was faced. This alone must have been an inestimable boon to a busy woman. In public he was silent, and in the memoirs of his day his words are hardly ever quoted, so that his name is now forgotten in the history of that time. For twelve of his thirty years' service with the Queen they were in almost daily intercourse. After the Prince grew up Elphinstone was no longer with him the whole time, but still accom-

panied him on most of his travels abroad ; and even during the last years, when there were fewer problems to consider, he journeyed to Windsor or London, Scotland or the Isle of Wight at frequent intervals, and there was no diminution of his devoted service.

Late in life he married a girl of 20 and there followed thirteen years of radiant happiness. And then one blustery March evening tragedy overtook them and my mother was faced with the agonising reality of his death. The shock turned her to stone. Silence was her only refuge, and for many years to come the very mention of his name was more than she could bear.

The result was a strange and difficult atmosphere for us growing children. All around in the house were evidences of his personality ; the furniture that he had collected from many parts of the world ; the antique Greek pots from the Aegean and Renaissance majolica from Italy ; his own unusual water-colours were upon the walls ; even the doors and library panels were of painted wood, showing him not only an artist but a craftsman also. In the library were stored portfolios of his drawings. Over these I spent many hours—but always hours when my mother was away. Knowing how intimately he had been connected with the life of Queen Victoria's court, I often wondered as I grew up why there were so few references to him in published memoirs.

It was many years before my mother could speak freely of her married life, and then she did so only at infrequent intervals. Yet one stormy autumn, when her ever-hospitable roof gave shelter to myself and a sixteen-year-old son who was undergoing an anxious quarantine, she lapsed one evening into a rare mood of reminiscence. It was done largely to interest the boy, for our isolation was beginning to feel irksome. It had been a pouring wet day ; sitting over the fire in the fading daylight, my mother started to talk. The wind in the fir-trees out-of-doors sounded like the roaring of an angry sea ; the rain slashed at the window-panes, but little did we indoors care. Occasionally one or other of us would throw a fresh log on to the wood fire, when the flames lit up the room in the growing dusk, shining on the polished surfaces of cabinets from Genoa and Seville, and drawing a steely glint from a case containing a sword and many medals that hung among the water-colours upon the walls. But we three were far away from a Surrey drawing-room. We were sailing distant Grecian waters in a royal yacht ; we were en-

countering men of blood and iron in Prussian palaces ; we were entertaining dull potentates, receiving awkward confidences and were learning the almost insuperable difficulties of carrying out Queen Victoria's commands with both tact and exactitude.

Presently my mother stretched out her hand for the silver chain with keys attached that was invariably lying somewhere close to her, and leaving the room for a few moments, she came back carrying a large black-edged envelope. Inside it were three bundles of letters held together by indiarubber bands, brittle with age, each with a label of a different year upon them. The sheets had wide black borders and were covered with a flowing script. At first Queen Victoria's writing, easy to my mother's experienced eye, defeated us juniors ; gradually, however, we began to decipher words and then whole sentences. It was a thrilling occupation, glancing through short notes or plunging into the difficulties of closely written pages, and we spent many happy hours deeply absorbed.

"One day," said my mother, "you might perhaps write an account of your father's life from these letters, though not yet. Anyway, I will leave them to you, and eventually you can have a try. For the present they are better kept locked up."

So they went back to their hiding-place for a few more years and it was not till the late spring of 1939 that with a heavy heart I slipped the silver chain of keys into my own bag and saw two large despatch-cases taken from their cupboard and placed inside my small Morris car. One case was square and black, the other, long and narrow, was of leather which had once been scarlet and had upon it stamped in gold the royal crown and the words "Prince Arthur."

Curiously, twenty minutes later, when I had driven through Staines and was turning into the great West Road, a large royal car slipped past, keeping its station just ahead through all the traffic as far as London. In it I recognised the well-known figure of a most gallant gentleman, Arthur, Duke of Connaught. Eighty years had passed since his mother wrote to my father the first of the letters now lying on the seat beside me, and fifty years had gone by since anyone had read them.

It was, I admit, with almost unbearable impatience that I waited for the moment when I could put the Chubb key into the locks and open the cases. There, packed as tight as they would go, were bundle after bundle of letters. Squeezed among them were a few small diaries filled with my father's exquisite

handwriting. Many letters were signed "Arthur," "Louise," "Helena," and "Leopold." One envelope contained some hundred sheets from the German Crown Princess. Another was marked "Letters to keep" and carried such signatures as "Derby," "Spencer," and "Charles Gordon." Large straggling children's scrawls filled another, but for the most part the letters were tied together like those we had seen before, and their date marked on a slip of cardboard. It was not the correspondence of three years, but of thirty. Here at last was part of the answer to that much-pondered question, "Why was not my father better remembered?" For as the correspondence unfolded itself day by day to our absorbed reading, it became clear that Her Majesty had written of far too intimate matters for him to have divulged. There could have been no question during his lifetime of publication.

The Queen's letters to my father numbered nearly 600; in about half of them she replies to several of his, sometimes three or four, and begins with the words "The Queen thanks Major Elphinstone" and later on "The Queen thanks Sir Howard"; a hope dawned in us—were his letters to her possibly still at Windsor Castle? It was a hope soon to be shattered; for answers there were, some fifty or so, but only one or two of interest. All the personal ones had vanished, all the answers to Her Majesty's conundrums and the solutions to her frequent cries of "What can be done?" Had they been thrown into long-forgotten waste-paper baskets, or had they been destroyed as too intimate for future eyes? It was not till late in 1942 that we handled the missing letters. They had been bound with infinite care among twenty huge volumes of Confidential Family Papers which had been at Bagshot Park, not a mere 600 of them but several thousand, dovetailing with exactitude into those of Her Majesty. For fifty years the two collections had lain untouched in two houses within a mile of each other.

The setting in which Elphinstone's letters were written is varied and occasionally unusual. Reports of Prince Arthur's doings had to be sent to the Queen three times a week, in times of stress sometimes daily or even twice daily, and we get a vision of long hours of toil with pen and ink in many parts of the world. His style at first is stilted and uncomfortable, obviously a pen was never his true friend as were pencils and brushes. Yet whatever happened, the day's work being over, Her Majesty must have an account of its happenings, be it written in a continental

express, the sheltered darkness of a sick-room, a hut beside an Alpine glacier or a camp-fire under desert stars. The North Sea or the Indian Ocean might do their worst, the undergrowth of a Nova Scotian forest might weary to exhaustion, the office table might be littered with unfinished work, yet the letter to the Queen must be written, though the clock strike midnight or even five in the morning. Wherever he went there went with him a travelling inkpot with double-closing safety lids, and some immaculate sheets of crested writing-paper. And as we read these pages seventy or eighty years afterwards, we gain knowledge not only of the man himself but of the royal mistress whom he served.

Both from Elphinstone's letters and her own we see Her Majesty in a more intimate and a more friendly light than that in which she is so often shown. Her difficulties over politics and ministers are here a side issue for she is dealing with home and family affairs. In the course of time she grew to treat Elphinstone as a true friend, and it is from this angle that a hundred small points become visible to the common gaze perhaps for the first time. Many and varied are the subjects with which the Queen deals, yet one thread runs through all these letters, stringing them firmly into a golden chain, her passionate adoration for her son Prince Arthur.

During the Prince Consort's lifetime the pages that she used were white with varied headings and crests, but the subject matter was of unimportant everyday happenings. After 1861, though the interest of the letters increases, their outward charm vanishes. Gone are the gay sheets edged with fine gold, their twisted monograms embossed, sometimes in gold, sometimes in green, blue or red. No longer does the Queen write on paper engraved with pictures of Balmoral, Windsor or Osborne. Instead, funereal black borders an inch deep surround the writing, covering almost half the area of every sheet; and though the black borders decrease slightly in width as the years go by, and Her Majesty sometimes tries a new variation of the monogram V.R. or V.R.I., yet to the very end she uses the black-edged notepaper, leaving it to her children to branch out into brightly coloured initials and gay headings.

Lovely things these letters! Merely to handle their limp, faintly discoloured sheets seems to bring to life the comfortable, heavily furnished rooms of Victorian security in which they were written. One can imagine luxuriously appointed writing-

tables of ornate Boule inlay of brass and tortoiseshell; huge blotters of chased silver and inkstands of malachite and gold; paper-cutters of ivory, paper-weights of alabaster; miniatures, photographs and portraits, massive candlesticks giving forth faintly the elusive scent of sealing-wax. One can almost hear the rustle of silk dresses as those royal ladies sat at their tables writing, and the sharp sound of rich hand-laid paper as they turned over a page to cover it with the sloping script of the day. The writing went on almost ceaselessly. There were no telephones to hasten or alter plans, no wireless news to break the thread of thought, no drone of planes overhead to disturb the silence. The sweet scent of hyacinths and roses from the garden filled the quiet rooms. Almost the only sound was the unforgettable murmur of a quill pen travelling on, and on, and on across the precious pages.

CHAPTER II: IMPERIAL RUSSIA

THE family of Elphinstone claims a long descent. The earliest named in their tree is one John de Elphinston, who lived in 1238, nearly 300 years before his descendant, William, Bishop of Aberdeen and founder of its University. At what particular date Sir Howard's branch divided from that of Lord Elphinstone has been a matter of debate, but the earliest of the family who is of importance in this book is another John who was a Captain in the Royal Navy in the eighteenth century. He was recognised as a cousin and friend, if not as his heir, by Arthur Elphinstone, Lord Balmerino, when the latter ascended the scaffold on Tower Hill in 1746—his life forfeited and his estates attainted, with Lords Lovat and Kilmarnock, the three last men to be beheaded.

John Elphinstone saw service in the navy in many parts of the world, gaining a reputation for courage, resolution and diligence. During the reign of Catherine the Great, Her Imperial Majesty, while engaged in war with Turkey, found that the Russian fleet was not all that could be desired, and requested help from England to put matters on a better footing. In 1769 Captain John Elphinstone, with the approval of the Admiralty, entered the Russian service with the curiously mixed ranks of Brigadier-General and

Rear-Admiral. He was well received by Catherine, but the inefficiency and want of discipline among the Russian officers was almost unbelievable, and led to difficulty. We get an instance of why it was not easy for different nationalities to work together; under the British system of prize money the naval officer of that period had considerable hope of retiring as a rich man; his opposite number in Russia also expected riches, but by a different method—from a commission here and a percentage there. What to the Russian mind was custom and mere common sense, was to John Elphinstone flagrant dishonesty.

His first arrival at Kronstadt to inspect the fleet gave him an idea of the state of discipline he had to deal with. He failed at first to find the Admiral Spiridow. However,

“Soon after,” he writes, “while in the street, I felt myself suddenly embraced and kissed by someone in a dirty and greasy dressing-gown, lined with sheepskin, an unshaven beard of some length who to my astonishment proved to be Admiral Spiridow.”

Going on board to inspect, he found not a single officer of any rank. Nor was it only a fellow admiral whom Spiridow treated in cavalier fashion. We are told that when Catherine herself came to inspect his fleet, she was kept on board the *St. Eustaff* waiting for half an hour “before the Admiral left his cabin, having taken too long a nap after dinner.”

Four books of Elphinstone's Journals give details of his experiences in his expedition against the Turk. His duties in Russia were first to get the fleet into condition to sail, and then to take it to the Mediterranean. He found the ships in a bad way, and the officers mutinous. It was only by personally applying to Catherine that he was able, in the face of enormous difficulties, to get the squadron ready for sea. Bad seamanship on the part of the Russians scattered the fleet on their way south, but in May 1770 they arrived off Cape Matapan and found the squadron under Count Orloff, whose orders were to assist Elphinstone in every way, the agreement being that the latter should never be put under the charge of a Russian officer. It was a fine achievement to have succeeded in the first part of his work in the face of so much inefficiency. To beat the Turk now that he had seaworthy ships was an even greater feat, for many of the officers who manned the ships were cowardly, drunken and incompetent.

After searching for his enemy, on May 27th, 1770, Elphinstone discovered the Turkish fleet. Signal was given for a general

chase, but no ship obeyed or made sail until a threat to fire upon them made them carry out orders. The flagship engaged the enemy ; but Elphinstone could not induce the other ships of his squadron to attack, in spite of firing on them. To an English officer accustomed to have his orders carried out with promptitude, there followed what must have been a couple of months of exasperation. Time and again the Turkish fleet lay in his power ; time and again he signalled to attack, only to be disobeyed by the Russian captains. Admiral Spiridow in particular was one of the worst offenders, and on Elphinstone's remonstrating with Count Orloff the latter naïvely explained that he could do nothing with Spiridow as he had drunk too much brandy.

John Elphinstone's eventual success—the complete destruction of the Turkish fleet at the Battle of Tchesme—was due partly to the use of shell, used for the first time in a purely naval battle, and partly to the help of two or three outstanding subordinates, Kruse, Grieg and an English volunteer, Howard, Lord Effingham, as well as to his own determination during months of heart-breaking work.

The Empress Catherine herself treated Elphinstone in a most friendly manner. He wrote the following account of a dinner in the Imperial Household :

“ I did not expect to find so much ease at the table of so great a sovereign ; she sat like the mistress of a private family, speaking to all at table with the greatest affability. The dinner was dressed in the German, French and English taste. When the Chamberlain brought the golden water basin to the Empress, everyone rose while she washed her hands and mouth. After that all crossed themselves, and bowed when she retired. We then all withdrew to a large apartment with a billiard, card tables, etc., in it, when coffee was served to us. Everything has the air of ease and freedom in this palace, none of the Empress's attendants wear swords, nor has she any guards, and if she passes through any of the apartments, everyone knows they are to take no notice by bowing or any other mark of respect.”

Catherine continued her friendship to John's numerous family. One of his sons, Philip, carrying despatches from Admiral Kruse to the Empress at Zarsko Zelo

“ . . . was conducted to her presence, when she commenced an enchanting conversation in which she complimented the gallantry

and many naval achievements of his family ; and after proceeding upon various topics for about half an hour she said, calling him ' my son,' ' Now let us proceed to business. I have received the despatches which have afforded me infinite satisfaction ; I have to thank you for your bravery and zeal ; I beg you to describe to me the position of the ships,' which, as Elphinstone explained, she indicated with her pencil upon a leaf of her pocket-book ; and as she gave him her orders for the Commander-in-Chief she presented him with a rouleau of ducats, a beautiful little French watch, and although very young promoted him to the rank of Captain."

There is another story of Catherine, in connection with that Admiral Kruse, who had served with John Elphinstone at Tchesme. His portrait shows him as stout, and he was renowned for his girth. After gaining a victory over the Swedes he came to pay his respects to the Empress.

"Owing to his corpulency the narrow plank floor of the presence chamber shook with his weight which the Admiral remarked upon with some little humour to Catherine, when she turned this circumstance into the following compliment : ' My brave Kruse, wherever you go you make the earth to shake under you and your enemies tremble.' "

The connection of the Elphinstones with Russia lasted nearly 100 years, for John had a large family, a daughter who became Lady Dymoke, and many sons, four of whom served not only in the British but also in the Russian Navy. To our ideas it seems a haphazard arrangement when one reads of John the eldest son who served as a midshipman in Russia, and later commanded H.M.S. *Glory* at the battle of the Glorious First of June, and of Samuel and Philip who were both lieutenants R.N. and Captains in the Russian Service. Thomas, another brother, was said to have retired with nearly £50,000 from a rich prize captured at sea ; enough to make any naval officer of the present time think longingly of " the good old days." Howard, the fifth son, the godson of Lord Effingham, struck out a new line. Entering the Royal Engineers, he served with such distinction in the Peninsular War that he was made a baronet in 1816 for his services and later became Colonel Commandant of the R.E. He in turn became the godfather of the Sir Howard of this book. Samuel, John's second son, who at the age of twelve had been with his father at the battle of Tchesme, later became a captain in the Russian service, and married Catherine, the daughter of the stout Admiral

Kruse. Samuel died at Cronstadt at the age of 30, leaving one son, Alexander, who was given a Russian title of nobility and received from the Russian Government an estate in Livonia, Sunzel near Riga. At the age of 10 he had entered the British Navy, from which he retired on half-pay as a Captain in 1814. From then on he lived largely in Russia and 'was well received at Court. In 1819 he married Amelia, the daughter of Frederick Lobach of Riga, and most of their long family were born in Russia. It is uncertain when they left Sunzel. Howard was born there, but received some of his education at the University of Bonn. We know very little of his early years ; but by 1846 the family had lost money and settled at Livonia Cottage, near Sidmouth, bringing with them a few family treasures, medals, a jewel or two and a few ikons of intricate work in gold and enamel.

It is here that we get in touch with their characters.

CHAPTER III : LIVONIA COTTAGE

FROM the Livonia of Imperial Russia to Livonia Cottage, Sidmouth, seems a far cry in more ways than one ; it is from the latter that we get the earliest letters to Howard covering some three or four years, and mostly written by his eldest sister, Rosalie, showing us the family settling down in England.

Livonia Cottage had its charms. Halfway between Sidmouth and Sidbury, with a few acres falling gently to the river Sid, it was not isolated. Near by was a group of Georgian villas, houses built for gentle-folk, with fine cedars and well-kept lawns, a copse or two tucked into a fold of sloping field, having each a slightly varied air of dignity and comfort ; second, perhaps, third cousin of the Bowoods and Stowes of the land, yet recognisably of the same stock. The days of giant crinoline and machine-made ornament were at hand, but the letters of Rosalie Elphinstone breathe more the spirit of *Pride and Prejudice*. Visits to relations were of many months' duration ; balls at the assembly rooms in the nearby town were great events. Rosalie shows us clearly the characters of all those who wandered in and out of the quiet rooms and through the open doors of the painted iron veranda to the garden.

Livonia Cottage, less pretentious perhaps than some of its neighbours, was a low white house of Regency date. Though we hear of a governess, a carriage, half a dozen servants and plenty of travelling, yet the family considered that the life they were leading was one of poverty. Things had evidently been much more luxurious in Russia. Alexander in particular, the "Papa" of these letters, took this to heart, though whatever his income, one feels sure he would never have managed to live within it. In his portrait we see him in uniform wearing both a Russian and a Turkish medal. He looks neat and dapper, with curly hair and rather tight lips. He was undoubtedly a bit of a snob; past grandeur loomed larger in his mind than present facts, and his eyes were cast back to the glories of life in Russia, when economy was a word that implied nothing to him. He was worried also by the difficulties that lay in the path of a claimant to the attainted Barony of Balmerino, and spent much time poring over intricate family trees and dusty papers. He was anxious about his sons' advancement in life and the necessity of their keeping in touch with people of importance, but he seems to have had no very wide outlook beyond personal and family things. He is drawn by Rosalie's hand rather with a tolerant affection than a deep respect; the greater consideration was owed to "Mama." This lady does not appear to have enjoyed the transplanting from her native Russia. She emerges from the family letters as a more interesting character than her husband, and as something of an enigma. Stout in body, and sorrowful in mind, her eyes were fixed on the future world, as well as on the present. Her few remaining letters to Howard, all in German, are a series of deeply religious essays mingled with economical recipes of food and advice to be given to his servants. She worried terribly about her numerous and scattered family, and they in consequence became chary of telling her all the details of everyday life so as not to increase her anxieties. Even her dreams were troubled; at the time of Howard's examination at Woolwich, she writes:

"MY DEAR SON,

You will be wondering why I am writing to-day, but I just cannot help doing so as I had a very disagreeable dream about you last night. I dreamt that you had become so conceited that you were quite sure of passing a successful examination, relying entirely upon your own abilities and by no means upon God's help. . . ."

A few years later she writes to him :

“ Your letter gave me no end of pleasure. Yes, my dear son, our Lord has blessed me in giving me such good children. I could endure anything except an illbred child. It would soon bring me to the grave. . . . Is your new cook better and is the potato salad a success ? By the choice of the receipts I sent you, you will surely notice that I am economical. Yes, my dear son, if I were not, how could we keep up our position in the world ? I always think of you children, that you should never have to be ashamed of your parents. . . . ”

Later we find it is she who insists, with the help of Millie, the second daughter, in going through the chaos of “ Papa’s ” casual accounts and of bringing about some drastic economies, eventually indeed shutting up Livonia Cottage and going abroad where cash brought more comfort than it did in England. Even in youth she was no beauty, though she had fine eyes ; in her portrait we see her with hair plastered across a wide forehead giving little relief to over-large features, while the heavy velvet of her dress accentuates her ungainly figure ; the miniature of her in old age shows her truly plain. Their good looks the family undoubtedly inherited from their father, but we get an idea that the artistic and intelligent qualities that came out in her son may well have been derived from her ; there is more power in that wide forehead than in “ Papa’s ” spruce neatness. There must have been something very endearing about her, for she held the devoted love of her family, particularly of Howard, though in the faded ink of 100 years ago it is difficult to discover what these qualities were that made that formidable lady so beloved.

To Rosalie, “ dearest Howard ” was undoubtedly the most important person in the world. She was six years his senior ; the three brothers who came between had all drifted to that dim unknown land of India, which made letter-writing so difficult. The three younger sisters she looks upon still as children ; Milly, capable and gay, a most delightful companion, but who later was to marry a man whom Howard disliked, and thus inevitably cut herself adrift from him ; Ina, the beauty, going to her first balls :

“ I must say she looked exceedingly pretty and stylish, and I thought more than one of the gentlemen was seriously struck with her. One young midshipman was, I am sure, quite gone . . . ”

Ellen, delicate and spoilt, the youngest sister, was emerging from

a difficult age, never becoming a clear personality in these letters. Rosalie also was delicate and had "spasms," the origin of which we do not know. Was there also some past and tragic love affair? For at the age of 25 she looked on at life rather than took part in it.

For three years we get an insight into the family life from the pen of this clear-visioned girl, writing to her favourite brother whom she sometimes laughingly calls "Sir Howard." She tells him that he can write freely to her.

" . . . Nobody sees your letters. I only read out a bit here and there if I think it necessary. . . . You see I have not been behindhand in telling you all my thoughts which good example I hope you will follow. . . ."

We read of visits from roving Russian uncles, who wandered from Paris to New York and Mexico and back to Riga with a frequency that sounds essentially modern; Billy, the favourite, always ready with a joke, and Auguste, uncertain of temper, yet who generously pays for Howard's lessons in the violin and gives him a really good instrument. We hear of the garden and farm, and shed tears at the untimely death of Lily the lovely little cow. We spend long December hours in cold rooms busily stitching at embroidered waistcoats of "black satin with an elegant pattern" and caps for "Papa" and the brothers. We hear of balls and concerts and dinners with music afterwards; there are the thrills of private theatricals, and all the prolonged anxieties of waiting for the arrival of the packet from India, that should bring letters from the brothers, letters that in fact came so seldom.

That the family considered themselves a cut above their neighbours is shown by Rosalie:


"You brothers move in the world where everyone finds his level, and if you distinguish yourselves by your talents you still see those around you who do the same and that you can esteem. The retired life we lead on the contrary engenders great self-conceit, and when we sometimes go out it is in circles where we are never eclipsed and even think it right to be thought the first and best. Has not that struck you when you have been with us?"

Rosalie had herself perhaps more chance than the others of realising this characteristic, for she goes on lengthy visits to Norfolk Street, Park Lane, to the home of Aunt Dymoke, the

dignified widow of the King's Champion and Standard Bearer of England, who, however, was not above enjoying taking part in a hoax on St. Valentine's Day, and who sends love to dear Howard, and a request for a pretty water-colour for her album. These visits were only half a pleasure. There was churchgoing every day, little gaiety and many a dreary drive with Lady Dymoke and her daughter Lady Mansell in their cumbersome carriages, during one of which, however, they had the excitement of encountering Chartist rioters in Trafalgar Square. From London Rosalie makes plans to meet Howard near Chatham, with their cousin, Mrs. Masters Smith, who was so kind "and will do everything to make us see as much as possible of each other." We read of Rosalie's disappointment when Howard failed to arrive on a last visit before she left London on the journey back to Sidmouth. He on his side was not careless of her feelings, and her birthday was never forgotten. A beautiful book arrived on one anniversary; another year she sends:

"Many, many thanks for the pretty box you have so kindly sent me. It is the very thing I was just in want of to keep my work in. Aunt Dymoke had that very morning lent me one of hers as I had nothing but an ugly little basket. As to the enclosure that accompanied it I will not scold you, dear kind heart for being so thoughtful of me, but really and truly dear Howard I did not want it and you know if I had I should not have hesitated for a moment to ask you for it. And then in many ways dear old Aunty is very generous, besides I am just at present amply provided for. But I accept your kindness dear brother, as it will give me the right to insist on your doing the same whenever you should want it. . . ."

Unlike his father, however small his income might be, Howard could always manage a generous action.



CHAPTER IV : THE CHEERFUL SUBALTERN

MEANWHILE, in spite of his mother's dream, Howard passed first in the examination out of Woolwich, gaining also the prize sword for good conduct ; then having gone through the usual course of instruction at Chatham with credit, he was posted to Edinburgh as a second lieutenant in 1849. During the year 1850 he kept a small diary and some careful day-to-day accounts. His outlook on life was that of an overgrown schoolboy, considering work as a thing merely to be avoided. He decided to set up house with young Gosset, R.E., a newly elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and Durnford, a fellow subaltern with whom he squabbles at frequent intervals, only to have riotous peacemaking a few hours later. Then comes a search for lodgings, among the severe streets of Edinburgh, climbing the steep stone stairs of tall houses—as so many soldiers have done before and since—till eventually they found good rooms and Darnaway Street gave them sanctuary.

He then took part in the gaiety of a Scottish season, visiting theatres, pantomimes and concerts ; listening to Mrs. Fanny Kemble giving readings from Shakespeare in Queen Street. He “hopped about at the Assembly rooms and felt as stupid as an owl” when paying formal after-dinner calls. There were stately dinners when the dignified houses of Law Lords and Writers to the Signet in Heriot Row or Moray Place opened hospitable doors. There were more impromptu meals with fellow soldiers and their wives in suburban houses and barracks. There were hilarious revels at regimental dinners, after one of which up at the Castle with the 93rd Regiment he notes “a dreadful night, disgraceful proceeding!! Not back till 7 a.m. next morning, and stared at in the street.”

Hospitality had to be returned, so another day he “went staggering about the town with huge bundles of purchases in all manner of shapes and sizes for our first dinner party.” Many soldiers, gunners and cavalymen as well as highlanders and sappers, wandered in and out of Elphinstone's lodgings, in friendly, free-and-easy fashion. When Gosset goes on leave Elphinstone writes him “a most extraordinary effusion of nonsense” and then spends much time playing and painting till a few days later, coming home, “there was Gosset welcoming me with sundry kicks and cuffs, pleasant but rather painful.”

It was not only with soldiers he made friends. He was often at the observatory "and did twist and turn myself into all kinds of positions," and he saw much of Piazzzi Smyth, Astronomer Royal for Scotland, at this time aged 29, acquiring from him a life-long interest in astronomy, for the last book he was to study before his death in 1890 was an up-to-date treatise upon this subject. Another name that frequently comes into the diary is that of Maclagan, in whose house many hours were spent making music. From "young Maclagan"—probably the future Archbishop—he borrowed books and music and with him went for long walks during which they discussed the universe, looking for places to sketch beside the Forth, or strolling to Corstophine on Sundays after church. "Did I talk of that I ought to have done, viz. religion, no not one word" and "heard a beautiful sermon but lost sight of it as soon as I heard it and never even thought it over," are two entries written on Sunday evenings. There were picnics on weekdays to Roslin, and much riding out to Greenlaw, as Glencorse was then called, "where after several accidents to me we arrive . . . oh how stiff from riding nobody would have believed it possible without trying it, sore even to pain."

Though he was not as yet on the Survey branch of the Royal Engineers this work greatly attracted him. He went often to Arthur's Seat, where some of the work was then centred; for in 1853 there was published the 5 foot to the mile survey of Edinburgh, the work of the R.E., where Arthur's Seat is set forth with the various heights, names, etc.

A surprising proportion of his income was spent on gloves, every social function demanding a new pair. In July there was a big archery gathering at Bruntsfield, where many teams, both from England and Scotland, met in competition. "Everybody flocked thither and a pretty sight it was too. Of course, gallantry would not be thought of without a new pair of gloves 3/6, and stuffed also with strawberries 1/-."

Lunch seems to have been a midday snack before dinner in the early afternoon and often cost him no more than 2d., though on one occasion he treated himself to a little marmalade, an extravagance that involved spending 1/-. "Luncheon unnecessary 6d." shows how frugally he lived; yet more than once his account book shows that he sent home £10, generous gifts that must have taxed a subaltern's slender pay.

Very occasionally he dines alone "in a solitary and melancholy manner" when he took to reading poetry, and once tries his hand

at composing German verse, an effort which thank goodness did not please him enough to repeat. He was in fact attempting many mediums of expression, wandering about the windy streets of the town looking for views to sketch, finding any excuse to shirk the office and instead practise the violin, and spending what, in proportion to his income, was an extravagant amount on paper, paint and new strings.

To one who has spent some years in Edinburgh as the wife of a soldier there is a curious resemblance between those days and the 1930's. It is as if time had stood still. The same search for a habitation in the same actual streets and houses ; the same open hospitality from hosts of the same names—Balfour, Anstruther, Graham, MacLagan, etc. ; the same sumptuous New Club balls, and the same sketches done from back windows looking down on grey roofs and chimney-pots to the gold of a northern sunset over the Forth. A "ten horse power" takes the place of merely one ; the 93rd have changed into "the Argylls" ; but Holyrood houses the sovereign for a few short days in the year ; soldiers are in barracks at Piershill ; the "artillery" is fired from the Castle, the band still plays in Princes Street Gardens, and the wind still sweeps up from Waverley Station. The London of Lady Dymoke has vanished ; but a subaltern of sappers returning after eighty years would have found surprisingly few alterations in the social life of Edinburgh.

Elphinstone's great uncle and godfather, the first Sir Howard, had been commanding Royal Engineers in Scotland thirty years or so earlier ; his daughter Louisa married Colonel Robert Anstruther, so our Howard came north with introductions, and early in his stay he went to the Anstruthers at Balcaskie to attend the Highland games. "How stupid I always am at conversation, but particularly to-day. Not a word did I speak the whole day," he notes ; however, he "took a liking to Sir Ralph and his brother at first sight" as he watched them playing golf. He was shown Kellie Castle and St. Andrews by his host, exactly as another Sir Ralph Anstruther was to do to his daughter. Though Scottish by name, he had never before been north of the border, and he looked at the Highland games and dances with the eye of a Sassenach, writing an account of them to Rosalie that brought the following reply :

LIVONIA, 2 Nov. '49

"You call your last letter to me stupid ; I assure you I found it highly amusing and only wish I could write anything half so

enlivening. Really your description of the Ball at St. Andrews made me laugh until I nearly cried—what fun you must have had. Have you yet yourself attempted a Scotch reel? I rather think you will never be able to dance it with the required energetic movements. I suppose Major Anstruther did it in quite the true style. . . .”

In spite of his laughter at Highland customs and his stupidity at conversation, the liking had apparently been mutual, and this was the first of many visits to Balcaskie.

On his return to Edinburgh “Away with the speed of a sluggard to the office which I did not reach till 12” he writes. Lectures were obviously things to be avoided, so also was “that dingy office.” But after he had been in Edinburgh a few months a new C.R.E. appears upon the scene—one Colonel Harry Jones, a veteran of Peninsular and Waterloo days. His views upon office work were slightly different from that of young Elphinstone’s, and the diary, instead of usually mentioning that the office had been shirked, says “To the office, where of course was blown up for being so late . . .” A few days later: “Jones in a dreadful way. Twice at office and missed him each time. Of course ordered to attend daily.” Tension grew less after a time and a few years later when there were more exciting duties to be done than paper work and lectures, he and Sir Harry Jones fully recognised each other’s good qualities.

Sometimes Elphinstone gets into uniform for some function or other and the sentence “encased in cab with Colonel to Castle” is a nice effort of alliteration.

Scotland held relatives.

“After having been to the office, I took a ride to Carberry, where I was struck with my cousin, altogether an eventful day.”

This was the first of several visits to Carberry, the home of Colonel J. Elphinstone, whose son became the 15th Lord Elphinstone. Here he seems to have enjoyed himself, and been a welcome guest. There were several very attractive daughters there, only one of whom was at this time married. Later we are continually meeting the name of Miss Elphinstone in connection with balls and assemblies.

Edinburgh was obviously not entirely populated by males and Howard had a keen eye for a “pretty darling.” “After office, everywhere in search of darling, but did not find it till late, when of course with a clergyman. Dissatisfied to dinner.” A few

days later : " Heard the band play, where darling was dreadfully abused by Jones." He also fell head over heels in love (for a few days) with a beautiful Miss Williamson, whom he met at the house of Mrs. Sandford, a friend of Rosalie's ; worshipping her from afar in church, and at the play from a nearby box, where he had greater opportunity for his pencil to get to work. We are given a sketch of a sweet Victorian maiden with bottle-necked shoulders and gaze averted to the stage, her dark hair coiled low upon her neck and encircled with a small green wreath.

Before going home for Christmas he buys—brave man—dresses as presents for his sisters ; and the last entry in 1850 runs " Applied for leave and went home."

Life was vastly entertaining.

CHAPTER V : WAR : IN PLAY AND IN EARNEST

HOWARD kept no diary in 1851. When he picks up a fresh notebook in January 1852 tragedy has fallen upon him ; Rosalie is dead.

What was the cause of her death we shall never know ; but we find Elphinstone facing what was perhaps the greatest sorrow of his life—shaken and miserable. Returning from an evening at Mrs. Sandford's house he notes : " What heartless remarks about Rosalie, they sting me to the soul." He meets with understanding from Lady Anstruther, who writes to him a letter full of sympathy and telling him to name his own time for a long visit " as we are *quiet people* and I hope you will not shrink from coming to us." The tone of his diary is very different from that of two years earlier. Life would never again be the same light-hearted affair ; for war and wounds were shortly to follow, and the Elphinstone that we meet after the Crimea is a rather grave young man, his sense of humour temporarily subdued. His main idea early in 1852 was to get away from Edinburgh. That 5-foot map exercised great fascination. Years earlier he had tried to get taken on by the Survey branch, only to be told he was too young. Now at last he got his desire, being appointed to Darlington at the end of March for work on the Ordnance Survey.

Though Colonel Harry Jones may not altogether have approved, he cannot have failed to take notice of the slight young subaltern at Edinburgh, for he was not of the usual mould of junior officer. Many other things than sport and gaiety entered into his scheme of life; the recommendation of his seniors for special work in the autumn of 1853 had probably more behind it than merely the question of knowledge of the German tongue. Whatever the cause, he was chosen as one of six officers representing the different arms of the service who were sent to attend manœuvres on the Continent, manœuvres involving Austrian, Russian and German troops. The Czar, the Emperor of Austria and various German kings with all their staffs were present, and the ground covered ranged from Berlin to Olmütz, and thence to Warsaw. One realises from this triple alliance of armed forces how the name of Napoleon was at that period a living, incalculable power, whereas Bismarck and Moltke had yet to write their names across Europe in letters of blood.

The three countries vied in outdoing each other, not only in the excellence of their troops, but in the magnificence of their celebrations. Elphinstone's description of the pageantry of Russian Warsaw contrasts sharply with his comments on the poverty of the countryside, with the peasants ill-fed and villages poor, the small houses built of wood without gardens or orchards, the ground looking sterile and the people earning from 6*d.* to 1*s.* a day, and feeding mostly on potatoes. He considered that even the mass of rank and file in the army was under-nourished. Warsaw at night, on the contrary, was a blaze of light and gaiety, the long avenues illuminated in different colours, the theatre ornate, the performances first-class, the fireworks spectacular.

"... There appear to be two great drawbacks to the efficiency of the Russian Army," he notes. "First the inferiority of the officers, the majority of whom seem to be of the same intellectual stamp as the men, without thought or energy, and secondly the absence of a proper commissariat. . . . In general, I should say that the men are too poorly fed. . . . If these two points could be reformed I think the Russian troops would form a very superior force. They have one very good point 'they don't run'!"

Of the Prussian army on one occasion he says: "Considerable confusion occurred. . . . Battalions of opposed infantry in close column were standing for nearly a quarter of an hour firing into

each other at about a distance of 20 yards. The King most wisely ordered the bugle to sound a halt."

He also noticed two innovations; the first was the presence of a newly raised "Sanität" corps for dealing with the wounded. Each division consisted of 10 wagons, four being springless with eight seats hung on leather straps, four having springs to carry one severely wounded man each, and two store wagons for medicines. There were three divisions, 30 wagons in all for the whole army. The other new idea was the use of electric wires running from the headquarters of the different camps to each other and to the town "for the purpose of communicating messages. It was an experiment tried to observe how far it could be adopted in actual warfare."

Two sentences in this diary throw a sidelight on the character of this young man of 23: "saw old church of 11th century whereby nearly missed my train" and the other "Dined with the Emperor . . . was introduced to the Queen, commonplace looking woman." Unlike his father, royalty as such held no glamour for him.

Within a year he was to see the Russian troops from a different angle. In the summer of 1854 Elphinstone was ordered to the Crimea

We have some sketches of this time, for the most part clear-cut statements of fact, topographical landscapes or meticulous interiors of huts, where careful attention has been given to the vivid pattern on a dressing-gown which hangs upon the wall, to the braid of a uniform coat or the shape of a candlestick or saddle. Other sketches, however, are skits of the British soldier under difficulties, cheerful in spite of shells, mud, snow, and semi-starvation. A series of four water-colours show the change in an infantryman from the smart scarlet pipeclay and upright military bearing of July 1854 to the disreputable looking brigand of December 1854, standing in water, dressed in rags and clutching a blanket about his shoulders to protect him from the wind.

During the campaign he was to make two firm friends, Charles Gordon and John Cowell, both of them Royal Engineers; it was Cowell who was to be responsible for two of the three most important turning-points in Elphinstone's life. (Curiously enough, their youngest grandsons were to find themselves, eighty-five years later, in France, unexpectedly serving together, not as sappers, but as gunners.) We have only the words of others for Elphinstone's actions. We are told that he showed cool courage

at Galata by embarking with two other officers in a caïque and rescuing four drunken soldiers in the dangerous current. We know that he was twice mentioned in despatches, being specially brought to notice by Lieut.-General Sir Harry Jones; that Sir Colin Campbell recognised his fine qualities in "the arduous work which involved constant labour and patience under very trying circumstances," and that Sir William Gordon, R.E., was keenly appreciative of this "young subaltern, who was full of quiet humour, very observant and quick at detecting humbug or affectation." "He was singularly cool in danger," wrote a fellow officer, "as I well remember walking in an advanced trench on the Right attack with him when we had to pass a gap where there was no cover at all, thereby affording the enemy a sport like rabbit shooting—with us for rabbits. When it came to Elphinstone's turn, he merely made a quiet remark after getting across, 'that was a good shot considering I was running', the bullet having just grazed his coat."

He was always ready for adventure, and one night with two other engineers tried how far they could creep in front of the Redan before being stopped. On September 8th in the final assault upon Sebastopol, he was wounded in the head and collected with the dead for burial; but his batman passing by, recognised the boots that he had polished so diligently and determined that they and their officer should have a decent grave; his life was saved, though the sight of one eye was gone for ever. This had surprisingly little effect upon his work as an artist, even at the time; for on a piece of buff paper at the back of which are roughly sketched some caricatures of French soldiers, is drawn with care the figure of a small lady dressed in a bonnet and voluminous skirts; instead of a lamp, in this drawing she carries under her arm a basket full of comforts for the soldiers, for whom she was to spend her long life in bringing comfort.

Three months before this, however, had occurred what was to prove the most important factor in Elphinstone's life. For his deeds after the assault upon Sebastopol on the 18th June 1855 he received the Victoria Cross

"For fearless conduct, in having, on the night of the unsuccessful attack on the Redan, volunteered to command a party of volunteers, who proceeded to search for and bring back the scaling ladders left behind after the repulse and while successfully performing this task of rescuing trophies from the Russians Captain

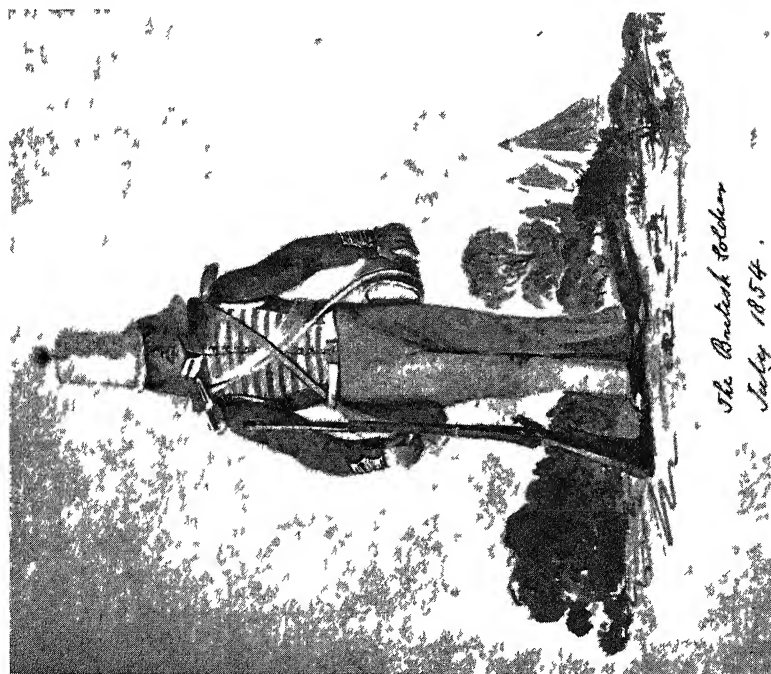
Elphinstone conducted a persevering search close to the enemy for wounded men, twenty of whom he rescued and brought back to the trenches."

CHAPTER VI: *EARLY DAYS AT COURT*

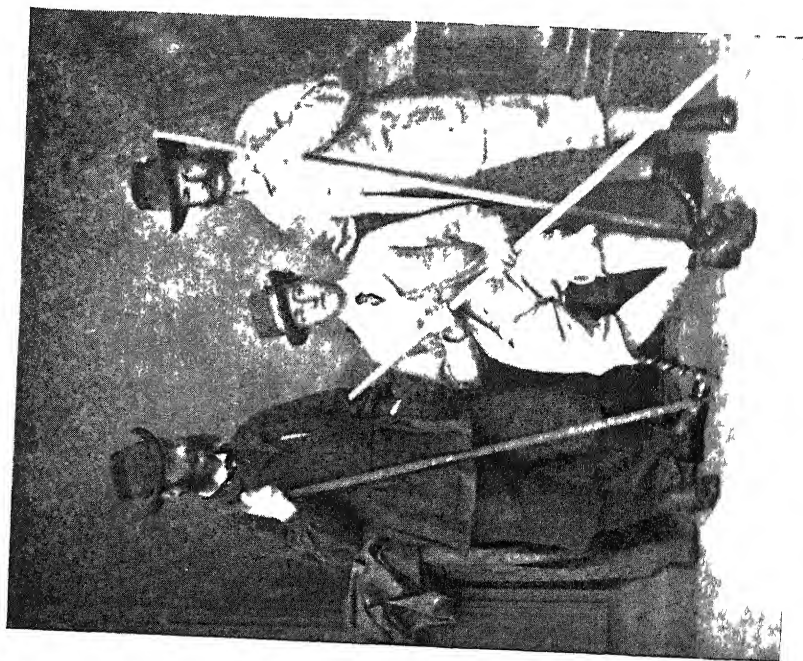
IT was in the autumn of 1857 that the Prince Consort began to look about for some army officer to act as Governor in charge of young Prince Arthur, and the first of the twenty leather-bound volumes of papers concerning the Prince starts with a correspondence upon the subject. The boy was seven, growing too old for nurses and governesses. His godfather being the veteran Duke of Wellington, a military career was already being planned for the child. His elder brother, Prince Alfred, was under the charge of Lieutenant (later Sir John) Cowell, Royal Engineers, Elphinstone's friend of Crimean days. Through him Sir Harry Jones was consulted as to any suitable officer for the post. Sir Harry wrote to Cowell early in September 1857, saying, "I know not of any officer so well qualified in every way as Captain Elphinstone, he is a good linguist, draws well, good tempered, and is a good officer of Engineers, and would, I am of opinion, make an excellent companion for the young Prince. I have known Captain Elphinstone for some years. He was employed under me at Edinburgh, subsequently in the Crimea. . . ."

The "arduous work and the constant labour and patience" as well as the Victoria Cross had wiped away the memory of all those lectures that had been so successfully evaded at the Scottish Command. Sir John Burgoyne, under whom Elphinstone had worked since the Crimea compiling the history of the R.E. during that war, also wrote in glowing terms, and Cowell passed on Sir Harry's letter to the Prince, adding his own recommendation. He mentioned, however, that Elphinstone had just been appointed to superintend the Topographical Department, newly established. . . .

"This is an appointment which he likes very much and one for which he is particularly well adapted. Captain Elphinstone's greatest ambition is to hold a high position in his Corps, and



The British Soldier in the Crimea in July and December, 1854
From sketches by Sir Howard Elphinstone



Major Harrison
Prince Arthur
Major Elphinstone



Prince Arthur with Major Elphinstone

the opportunity of advancement which is thus afforded him may be considered very good, and nothing *in his profession* would induce him to resign it voluntarily short of the prospect of active service in an European war. He sees that if he left his Corps for an indefinite period, he would on his return to it find himself in all probability in a much lower position than he now occupies. . . .”

It is interesting to see that Elphinstone looked at the question from quite a different angle. When the proposal was made to him, he asked for time to consider it; his main concern was whether he could make the boy his friend. “Now honestly and candidly give me your opinion as to whether my intended young charge and me would get on well. Is mine a character that he would take to, for I am *well* aware that it is not one that all boys would like. . . .”

On such a foundation of friendship the whole of Elphinstone’s life at Court was built. Had the tone been any other, the work he accomplished would have been impossible. Not merely did he gain the boy’s friendship, but in a short while all the royal children were treating him as a gay companion. “Please give my love to dear Major” is the frequent ending of letters to Prince Arthur signed Louise or Leopold. They sent “dear Major” presents of sketches and flowers and kindergarten works of art. A fluent brush and pencil soon found the way to young hearts.

With the Queen a formal attitude was of course *de rigueur*, and deference to her position remained till the end. But after a very few years the formal attitude was a cloak to a warm feeling of affection, loyalty and respect on the one side, and of reliance and trust on the other. She was to write later: “few if *any* gentlemen ever were on such confidential terms with me as dear excellent Sir Howard. . . .”

The Queen at first looked with anxiety at the new regime. On October 7th, 1858, she wrote a memorandum (upon seven large sheets of paper engraved with a picture of Balmoral Castle) addressed to her husband:

“I have for some time wished to commit to *Paper* my views respecting Arthur. . . . This Child is dear, *dearer* than any of the others put together, thus *after you* he is the *dearest* and *most precious* object to *me* on *Earth*. . . . It gives me a pang if any fault is found in his looks and character, and the bare

thought of his growing out of my hands and being exposed to danger—makes the tears come to my eyes. . . .”

Then followed six more sheets of anxiety.

Elphinstone took up his appointment, which was to be for anyway one year's duration, in January 1859. A few months before this he went down to Windsor Castle, and on the night of October 23rd he made the earliest entry in a diary which he continued to keep spasmodically for the next three years.

WINDSOR, *Midnight*.

“My first day at Windsor Castle.

Lunched with the equerries and then was presented to the Prince Consort. Mr. Jolley ¹ and Cowell came likewise. The Prince bowed graciously twice, then gave his hand. After one or two preliminaries and a momentary dead silence, I commenced at once about the period of my joining . . .

. . . The Prince then gave his views as regards education. ‘How much may be learnt out of doors, by teaching a boy birds, the different plants, botany, geology, even the formation and variety of pebbles, it fixes the mind early. The time of learning ought to be regulated according to the capacity of the boy on that particular day, at times 3 hours or more would not distress, at other times one hour would be too much. That music had been too much forgotten with the elder Princes, that the Queen did not wish him to be taught too much at first, as he was still a boy, that one defect of private education is the want of emulation which stirs up the boy's energies; the only way that one can now adopt to make him do a thing would be to say that he ought to do it.’ (I certainly felt inclined to say that I should insist on my dictum being obeyed.) ‘That as far as language went it would be as well to continue the plan hitherto adopted.’”

For the next few months life at court was evidently not too easy for the young soldier. Though the Crimean War had had a sobering effect on the once gay, irresponsible subaltern, yet he had by nature a cheerful disposition. Court life before Prince Albert's death was not the shrouded existence it became after 1861, but it was a middle-aged atmosphere that he entered at Windsor, devoid of all excitement. The members of the household among whom he found himself were for the most

¹ Mr. Jolley was tutor to Prince Arthur for many years.

part of an older generation. Sir Charles Phipps the Comptroller, General Grey the Queen's private secretary, Sir Thomas Bid-dulph, Master of the Household and later Privy Purse, and General Bruce, the Prince of Wales's Governor, were all elderly men. Cowell was a friend and contemporary, but he was frequently away travelling with Prince Alfred.

In his new post Elphinstone was on duty without a break. Unlike some of his married companions, he could not get away in the evenings from the court atmosphere to home life; there were no long holidays such as a schoolmaster or tutor would normally have, and there was no question of a few months "in waiting" alternating with some months off duty. Apparently there were no breaks in the routine of lessons throughout the year, no regular Christmas or summer holidays. Anniversaries took their place, but these were merely some fifteen isolated days in the twelve months. On these he was still on duty.

Except for a short visit home to attend a sister's wedding, there is no sign from his note-books or from the Queen's letters of any cessation in the work, till Her Majesty writes on November 14, 1862: "Would 10 days or a fortnight's holiday be the right time for Christmas?" This was nearly four years after he had taken up the post, and by this time the young Prince was away from home with a separate establishment. This mental confinement was bad for everyone concerned, for a large part of his work was of the nursery-governess description, dealing with the routine of lessons, questions of discipline and details of health and underclothes; trivial topics which, undiluted with more enlivening ideas, must have been depressing in the extreme to an intelligent soldier aged 28.

Her Majesty's early letters are short notes sent by hand at any hour of the day, mostly enclosed in narrow envelopes, but sometimes twisted ingeniously like small *billets-doux*, to be handed to him perhaps as she passed on her way to dinner, or to go driving. They dealt with every kind of detail of the little Prince's life; nothing was too insignificant for her notice. She thinks "that 8 to 10 minutes is more than enough time for him to dress in" in the morning; she sends a reminder of the various people to whom he must write thanking letters after his birthday; she writes lists of what clothes and underclothes he is to wear, and the names and ages of boys whom he may have to play with for an afternoon. These numerous missives on small everyday happenings make up in the bulk an extraordinarily

vivid picture and give us swift visions of delight. Clearly can one imagine the pleasant evening's enjoyment broken by some untimely interruption that called forth the note: "If another time the Queen wishes to keep Prince Arthur a few minutes—to dance a reel with her—*she* will let the Major know so then there can be no mistake." Vital questions for decision were such problems as to whether the boy should visit the Talking Seal, or go instead with his father and mother to the flower show in London. In the warm June evenings we see Her Majesty enjoying her children in the garden at Windsor.

"Why did Prince Arthur *not* go out with his sister and brother this afternoon, and why did he come in so early? The Queen had supper arranged for him with his brother in the summer house. The Queen thought he always played with his sister and brother on Sundays?"

Young Albert Grey, the son of Her Majesty's secretary, was often asked to play with Prince Arthur if the latter had been good. Did the two boys ever have games of Red Indians up and down the Castle slopes? Later they were each to become Governor-General of Canada. Quite a number of boys are mentioned as playmates as well as Albert Grey, and little Lord Ely, whose mother was one of the Queen's ladies, was among them.

At this period Elphinstone caught the habit of memoranda—or was he commanded to produce them? There is one dated November 1860 advocating that Prince Arthur should be allowed to go down and play with the boys *at* Eton College, rather than have one or two selected children come up to the Castle. Elphinstone considered that "mixing with boys of all kinds would 'rub off' little eccentricities and softness of character which a home education must unavoidably produce. At the castle . . . other boys will give way to him and show him an amount of deference which must be injurious. This would not occur at Eton, where he meets boys on their own ground and where *he* is the stranger. . . ."

This suggestion about Eton was not adopted and slid into the archives without a ripple of comment. There were tales of inattention and problems of punishment. There were questions as to which Sunday service the boy should go to, morning or afternoon, for he was never allowed to go twice. There were scares about measles, detailed plans to avoid the heat of summer,

and corrections of spelling. "They should write Mama with one M in the middle and Papa with a large P at the beginning." On this question Elphinstone probably needed advice himself, for with his foreign education he never succeeded in spelling English correctly. On one point, however, there is no doubt: Elphinstone had been put in charge of the boy and without his permission no alteration of plans was considered. If the Queen wished to take her son on some expedition or merely for a drive, the note invariably takes the form of a request and not a command. From Buckingham Palace on the 10th March '59 she writes: "May Prince Arthur go with his sister and little brother to the play with us tonight? Has he been good?" Later from Osborne she asks: "May Prince Arthur go with us to Portsmouth this morning to see the 32nd Regt. (just returned from Lucknow) or does Major Elphinstone prefer that he should not? We shall be back by 12. Prince Leopold is going."

Quite early in his life at court one fact was made clear to Elphinstone—Her Majesty's intense dislike of warm weather; the perils of the midday heat and the danger of sunstroke are alluded to not once but many times as matters to be regarded with the deepest concern. Most Englishwomen beside the Thames are not worried as to whether their rooms shall be cool enough in March.

"As Prince Arthur has a little cold he had better not go out unless it clears up, and then not on the wet grass. Perhaps Major Elphinstone will take care he takes exercise at home and the rooms are kept cool as it is very mild."

The following year discussion arose on the question of exercise during the heat of the day, and it is interesting to see that during the Prince Consort's lifetime the Queen at moments disagreed quite strongly with his opinion. On May 18, 1860, she wrote at Buckingham Palace:

"The Queen finds from the Prince that Major Elphinstone has *already* mentioned the subject of Prince Arthur's morning walks in the heat, and that the Prince has *set his face* decidedly against it. The Queen is very sorry for it, as *she* feels convinced that if Prince Arthur *gets no fresh morning* air in the *heat* of *July* and *August*, his health *must* suffer, as she fully believes *all children* get a little morning air in the summer and don't go out in the boiling heat. . . .

P.S. Many people *say* that at Prince Arthur's age—too much learning and not *enough* air and exercise, checks the growth and weakens the brain, and this is what makes the Queen anxious."

Later the same day she wrote :

"The Queen would wish nothing to be settled or done till the great heat sets in, and in *all* these things the Prince's wishes *must* go before hers. Prince Arthur has, thank God ! very good health, but the Queen has perhaps a prejudice against going out in the middle of the day in summer, which may be erroneous when compared with the advantages to be derived from a boy's having his lessons *when* he is not fatigued from out door exercise."

The Princesses were brought up together and had each other as companions, but Prince Arthur's childhood sounds very lonely, for he was kept to a great extent away from his sisters and of his brothers he saw little. Prince Alfred, who was six years his senior, was already in the Navy ; he had a difficult character and when he was at home his younger brother was never allowed to be with him alone. Time proved it impossible for Prince Arthur to be much with his youngest brother Leopold, as the latter had the bleeding disease, and the risk of a blow or tumble in play was too great. There is no mention of any games in these early pages ; not even of cricket, for fellow players were too few. There was some fishing in Scotland, riding and a good deal of driving in the Park while at Windsor, some drill by competent instructors, and a surprising amount of play-going when in London. But the everyday life sounds monotonous and depressing. Until many years later there is no mention of the boy having even a dog as companion ; it was only in the year 1866 that the Queen writes she "has got a charming dog for him—a very large and most good tempered and faithful black curly-haired retriever." Long walks with his tutor seem to have been the usual recreation, walks punctuated with a little learning of natural history. It is with a sense of relief when looking over Elphinstone's sketch-books that we come upon gay drawings done to amuse the boy, sketches and skits obviously relating to some joke or other, and we realise that though with a pen in hand the young governor was stilted, yet with a pencil there came laughter and the natural gaiety of youth.

Elphinstone's second entry in his diary is written at Balmoral

in the autumn of '59. Then for nearly a year he used this book as a safety-valve, sometimes merely noting down the every day occurrences, but often making it an outlet for his feelings at difficult moments. His young charge was not always easy to handle—what boy of character would be? There were occasional tears that met with the Queen's disapproval; tact was required with the nurses and governesses; Mr. Jolley was far from being the personification of his name. Elphinstone had heartburnings over some of his own actions and he watched the Queen narrowly for signs—possibly real, probably imaginary—of disapproval of his conduct. He watched also his brother officials, noting down exactly how they dealt with situations, or with the people about them. It was not an easy time, but during it he learnt much that was to prove useful later.

At Balmoral on 10th Sept. 1859 he notes :

“ At one thirty I was called to the Queen's room. She was sitting as usual at the table in the centre of the room writing her Journal. Before her is the miniature of the Prince Consort, a very fine one and very like. I have an engraving done after it. *The Subject*. Is Prince Arthur improving and what is the cause of his naughtiness? . . . The Prince, she said, wished him to begin Latin soon. I objected as the difficulty of confining his attention was too great. Strong measures might have to be resorted to, as it would not do to commence and show the boy that you were obliged to abandon it; he obtains the mastery—to persist on the contrary might sour his temper. It is fine now, but will it stand proof against continual scolding. Besides the object to obtain in teaching at the present is not *what* he learns but *how* he does it. Is he capable of learning Latin as he ought to?

The love of learning of little Prince Leo, *not* inherited from her, she added with a laugh, she hated lessons, the Prince Consort on the contrary liked them above all else.”

Ten days later he writes :

“ The Queen sent for me at 10.30; wished to take the Prince with her. ‘ The Prince Consort told me that he was afraid that you had seen nothing of the country from your being so constantly kept at home with Prince Arthur. You ought to let him go with his sisters if you wish to go out.’

I replied that I did not by any means object to this confine-

ment, so long as I found that I was doing good ; and that I thought there was a sensible improvement.

I ought to have gone out shooting, but instead took a sketch-book and tried very hard, but what a difficult thing to get the colouring of the hills ; one is always at fault and cannot give the delicacy and smoothness the scenery ought to have.

A few days subsequent to this the Queen sent me a set of granite waistcoat studs as a mark of her appreciation of the above I presume."

Elphinstone's diary depicts the Queen as very considerate to those about her. His health had not been improved by his service and wound in the Crimea, and in her letters to him she continually begs him to rest if he had not been well. She was anxious that those about her should see as much as possible of her beloved Highlands. The following note is on writing-paper engraved with a picture of Balmoral Castle, a different view from that she had used for her long memorandum.

" Could Prince Arthur go out with us this morning at $\frac{1}{4}$ to 11 ?

If so, perhaps Major Elphinstone would go with the Queen and Princess Alice and take his sketch book."

Elphinstone, though not a creative genius, was yet a true artist and his work is far above that of the ordinary amateur. Though largely self-taught with very little time to give to this much-loved occupation, he was a fine draughtsman, whose work stands comparison with that of almost anyone of his time. His colouring is sometimes delicate and restrained, sometimes vivid and glowing, and his rapid sketches are exquisite things with a masterly power of eliminating all but the essential. That the Queen was sympathetic to this talent of his is clear. Her taste in art was not of the highest standard, yet she was not among the philistines to whom art meant nothing at all. Music and painting as we know played a considerable part in her life, and she encouraged all artistic activity in her children, among whom the Princess Royal and Princess Louise had genuine talent, while the Queen's own water-colours had considerable merit.

Those were quiet and uneventful days at Balmoral in the last years of Prince Albert's life ; filled with talk on the topics of fish and stag. There were questions of damming the trout stream and the impossibility of turning trespassers off the deer forests. We catch a first sight of a figure later to be so prominent

in Her Majesty's life ; " when I saw the Queen," Elphinstone writes in his diary on the 10th October, '59, " and mentioned the probability of John Brown going with Prince Arthur and myself, she turned round and said, 'Impossible. Why, what should I do without him ! He is my particular ghilley ! ' " There were long walks over Craig-na-Ban ; there were long talks in the evening among the soldiers of the household, reminiscences of past campaigns and criticisms of present conditions ; but there was little of excitement or importance to record as the October days slipped quietly by.

CHAPTER VII : WINDSOR AND OSBORNE

SO the autumn of 1859 came to an end, almost the last of those unclouded visits to the Highlands that the Queen loved so dearly. The outdoor freedom was temporarily over, and she did not suffer the change in silence. Elphinstone notes in his diary :

" Tuesday, 18th October 1859.

Back at Windsor. Arrived last night at 7.30 p.m. The air is very much heavier than the North, but nothing else. The Queen said : ' You cannot conceive what a complete change it is. Not only the weather, but the entire change of living. I can no longer go without being followed by a crowd. It makes me feel inclined to become quite like a naughty child. . . . ' "

The following day, which was rainy, she wrote to him : " What a day to begin with ! What a contrast ! "

Though to Her Majesty Windsor spelt an official routine which she often found wearisome and a climate she disliked, for the children there were happy days in those lovely surroundings, with paper-chases and rides in the Park, drives to Frogmore to see their grandmother, the Duchess of Kent, and meals out of doors in the summer-house. There were many early photographs taken here and at Osborne, some of which were given to Elphinstone, groups of the whole family posed in the gardens and on the terraces. The Prince Consort usually dominated the scene in a fantastically tall top hat, black morning coat, and low-

cut waistcoat ; beside him would stand the Queen in flowing cape and enormous poke bonnet above her voluminous crinoline of striped silk ; the children cluster round, the girls dressed as small replicas of Her Majesty in the same striped silk. Between forty and fifty yards would be needed for the Queen's skirts, tier upon tier of luxuriant flouncing, and the Princesses took perhaps half that quantity each ; nearly a hundred and fifty yards must have gone to the making of those dresses. The younger boys also wore petticoats (with white drawers showing below) being promoted to kilts on reaching the age of five or six. Sometimes the groups include the Duchess of Kent ; sometimes there are ponies and dogs, or a go-cart or carriage in the background. Often the children are taken in pairs leaning thoughtfully against a garden balustrade or in fancy dress after charades. In some of these groups Elphinstone appears among the entourage and guests, or he is photographed alone with Prince Arthur and Prince Leopold. At a casual glance one would take him for a middle-aged man instead of barely 30, for the formal dress of the day added to moustache and side-whiskers gave him a most grandfatherly air. If on the whole the days were dull and difficult, yet there were some compensations for him, and among these the library at Windsor Castle played no small part. Ruland, the librarian, was a brilliant man, a great lover of music, and many hours were spent with him in the library. What enchantment for book-lover and artist to have the free run of these quiet galleries, whose walls are lined to the ceiling with the wisdom of the world, bound in dull calf and tooled with faded gold, while on the tables and in cases are treasures innumerable. The tall windows look out over the river and the quiet meadows beyond, where Eton College chapel rises with the pearly beauty of a Greek temple above a medley of roofs and old brick walls half hidden among poplar, elm and willow. From notes in his sketch-books it is obvious Elphinstone took full advantage of his privilege, spending hours among portfolios of masterpieces, studying the Holbein portraits or copying the detail of a landscape by Claude ; afternoons of unbroken quiet in those peaceful rooms. Another lover of the library was the Queen's eldest daughter—Victoria, Princess Royal, at this time Princess Frederick William of Prussia, and from Elphinstone's diary we get an account of his first meeting with her husband. This was the beginning of an acquaintance that gradually ripened into firm friendship between the three, a friendship that was to have considerable

bearing on the young soldier's career. The two men had much in common in military matters, and the Princess found with Elphinstone interest and sympathy in all her artistic ideas ; sympathy that she received in such small quantities in the home of her adoption. The first part of this entry in the diary shows us Elphinstone in a mood of unhappy diffidence :

“ *Saturday, November 26, 1859.*

Dined with the Queen. I am always inclined to fancy that my position is beneath me, or else I am unable to uphold it sufficiently. Cowell did it by self-confidence and politeness. Can you not do the same ? It requires *great effort*, but I ought to have seen enough of the world to know that *without great effort one cannot attain to much*. I bowed on entering the drawing-room to the Duchess of Kent. She seemed pleased, which pleased me, as I am anxious to efface the bad impression that many things have led me to believe I have made there.

The Prince W. of Prussia spoke to me a few words after the Queen left about calling downstairs (to see Prince Arthur's rooms). I was particularly pleased with the manner, there was none of the hauteur I had previously ascribed to him.”

“ *Sunday, November 27, 1859.*

Prince Frederick William came into our room, after Prince Arthur had finished supper. We showed him over the room, talked chiefly on military matters. He admired the position of Aldershot and its uses, although he thought that the advantage of the camp had been destroyed by the erection of permanent barracks. He did not much admire the *quality* of the English soldiers, too many of them boys.”

Ten days later he writes :

“ *Thursday, 8th December 1859 (Osborne).*

Last Tuesday we came down here, Osborne, the weather was so very stormy on the Monday that at the last moment the journey was postponed until the following day, and the intimation sent to old Admiral Bowles that should on Tuesday afternoon the sea still continue to be rough, the Queen and royal family would sleep at Admiralty House (his own).

Biddulph sent him down a cook to prepare !! In what a state he must have been !

Osborne is *not* a winter residence. Everything is calculated to summer enjoyment. How bleak the terraces now look. . . .

The Italian architecture of the whole place is so unsuited at this time of year.

The Prince very amusing after dinner. Told his recollections of the French actor Lavoisier (a species of Albert Smith). It is seven years since he saw him, yet he recollected the pith of his sayings! What a wonderful memory the Prince has!! I have never met any to equal him in that respect."

Elphinstone never fell into the easy mistake of writing or speaking of Arthur and Louise, Leopold or Alfred, even when they were small children and he was writing only for his own private diary :

"How stupid of me to allow myself to be forced into confessing that it was my birthday. Little Prince Arthur rushed at once into his bedroom and brought out a beautiful antique seal (Renaissance style). All his sisters likewise gave me something. That sweet little Princess Louise sent such a pretty chair watch-stand, and when I tried to thank her she modestly ran away to avoid receiving them."

On 19th December he writes :

"The snow fell thickly last night and lay this forenoon above 6" deep, the sun shone after 11 a.m. and the day became very perfect.

Was infected with good humour, and at last the Prince of Wales, Becker, Keppel and I went out to build a snowman. The Prince Consort came subsequently and assisted to build. We then commenced on the slopes to make a slide down the hill. The Prince Consort went to work most energetically, pulling himself the little sledge and treading down the loose snow etc. Afterwards there came all the Princesses and the little boys, the Prince Consort likewise joining in the slide. Each joined in and enjoyed like a child."

Elphinstone watched his seniors closely.

"Colonel Bruce is certainly a man with very great tact and very fine manners, suavity itself and pride insuperable. Yet he is so much thought of that it is worth while to watch him closely and see how far you could imitate. His language is well chosen and his speech is clear and full but cautious. There is nothing however that you could not acquire. His intellectual faculties

as well as receptive are always braced and bent to enter into your views.

Did you see when yesterday you entered with Keppel more into Prince Arthur's affairs than was judicious, how he was anxious to leave so as to break the conversation."

Later it is Cowell he watches :

"I have been noticing Cowell a good deal lately. All he says has been well and thoroughly considered. He is never hasty, nor is it possible to heat him in argument. He remains quite cool and whether speaking to the Prince or others affects openness and candour. . . ."

A few days later, after dining with the Queen, Elphinstone notes :

"Cowell sat next to her and I next to him. She very kindly spoke across to me twice so as to take off the effects of his superior position at table. It was kindly done and appreciated by me. . . ."

Watching others on different occasions he ejaculates :

"Take care, take care of arrogance, that unsupportable presumption. Nothing can atone for it,"

and another time :

"Oh vanity, how much it detracts from really good fine qualities."

We get another account of a rather different meal, this time a Household luncheon.

"I was distressed to-day at lunch by a remark of Hardinge's who turning to me said quite aloud 'Elphinstone I produce this for your special benefit, that when you intend to propose you should not delay because you fancy your love is safe and that there is no need to hurry. It is a dangerous proceeding.'

I at once answered to stop the remark that when I wanted to do such a thing I should take his advice, but that I had no need of it at present. I said this in the same bantering tone, but I must admit that I blushed or rather got uncomfortably warm. Lady Ely at the same time turned round to Miss Stopford, Cowell I am afraid did the same. General Grey turned deliberately round to her, and humbugged with her, the poor girl being

as red as fire. The General's bantering but heaped coals on the fire, when Lady Ely suddenly said: 'What have you been saying to Miss Stopford, General, she is as red as fire.'

Whether this was her true question or one to hide the girl's and turn it all on the General I cannot say, but the whole made me feel very uncomfortable and yet the odd thing is that nothing whatever has passed or to my mind anything gone so far as to show even a strong *partiality*. This has made the matter *very* awkward, and I really do not see how I am to get honourably out of it. I must be much on my guard tomorrow not to show any change."

Just before Christmas they left Osborne, and he writes:

"Last Saturday, Christmas Eve, many presents were given to all the household and I too came in for a share. Portraits of the Prince of Wales, Prince Leopold, Princess Beatrice, and a fine gold inkstand set with malachite from the Prince and Queen. The Prince was kind enough to bring these down himself. The good old Duchess of Kent sent me a pretty silver-mounted ivory paper cutter and a pocket book which the Princess Alice presented to me.

Becker and I were called upstairs before the remainder of the household to see the presents. All the young ones were in ecstasies. The effect was very fine. The centre room with tables all round and several Christmas trees contained the presents of the Royal family. The Queen's corner was to the right, the Prince's beyond. The number of presents each had was tremendous, more than they can appreciate. The little Princess Louise said it was 'Vraiment un peu trop extravagant.'"

The next day he wrote:

"*Tuesday, December 27th (Windsor).*

... The Queen sent for me. She was engaged at some needlework; unusual for generally she is at her journal or else letters. She wished Prince Arthur to have a holiday at 12th Night if the lessons were good. Usually, she said, this is not done, but as both Christmas and New Year fall on a Sunday, it might form an exception this time. . . ."

Elphinstone was worried about the idea of having Prince Leopold included in his charge. "It will be difficult to manage the two boys judiciously. Cowell thinks the same, and that I

ought soon to speak to the parents about it. This will require a great deal of consideration." In January he noted :

" 20th January—Friday, 1860.

Yesterday as I was entering the Oak room to watch Prince Leopold drilling I found the Queen there. I was going to retire, but she motioned me to remain. She saw I took great interest in the little fellow, and entered with Madame Hoci   (the governess) and myself into conversation. Shortly after she left and desired me to walk in the corridor afterwards. She spoke about Prince Arthur's lessons and thought the amount of :

' Scripture lessons was too great in comparison with his other lessons. That it was not required to render him a deep theologian, and was glad to see that I had thought the same, and had already spoken to Mr. Jolley about it.'

She then turned to Prince Leopold and said how distressed she was that he had grown so weak of late. . . . I thought that he should run about more ; these walks were too fatiguing and not exciting enough or amusing to keep up his spirits."

Eventually it became obvious that it would be impossible to bring up the two boys together.

At the New Year, Elphinstone wrote :

" This evening there was a dance. Prince Arthur had been warned to leave at 10.30 p.m. but he looked so miserable that the Queen sent to ask me whether he had better not remain until $\frac{1}{4}$ to 11. This dance was followed by a country dance (I with Miss Van de Weyer). What a nice high spirited girl she is. The New Year was announced with a great crash of drums, cymbals and all the trumpets etc. and immediately the Prince and Queen shook hands with all those around, and everyone was wishing each other a happy New Year and shaking hands."

On the first anniversary of Elphinstone taking charge of Prince Arthur, the Queen wrote him a letter of appreciation of his work. In his diary he notes :

" 18th Jan. 1860.

The Queen sent me a most pretty letter, approving highly of the way I was managing Prince Arthur. It was a document worth handing down to one's relations, and is written with so much feeling that it ought to be carefully kept from vulgar gaze.

Sir Harry Jones was here at the time and was very anxious to see it. It required an answer however, and difficulty had I certainly in framing that answer, as it had to be done in little more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour. I managed to send my reply just before she went to dinner, and was very nearly late myself. . . ."

Her Majesty's letter ran :

WINDSOR CASTLE, *Jan. 18th, 1860.*

"The Queen cannot let this day, which is the Anniversary of Major Elphinstone's assuming the charge of Prince Arthur, pass without expressing to him her and the Prince's high sense of the manner in which he has performed his task and the zeal and devotion which he has shown in the education of our darling little Boy. The Queen can bear witness to the affection her darling Child has for Major Elphinstone and she trusts that he (Major E.) will admit that the Queen never has interfered with the salutary and necessary strictness which Major Elphinstone has wisely shown in enforcing obedience and attention on the part of Arthur.

The Queen loves her children *far* too dearly *ever* to wish to see them indulged or spoilt, even when they are so worshipped and she may *here own* to the Major, she has (loved, adored) ¹ our little Arthur from the day of his birth. He has never given us a day's sorrow or trouble, she may truly say, but ever been like a ray of sunshine in the House!

The Queen sends Major Elphinstone some more photographs of Prince Arthur."

On reading his reply to the Queen, one feels it was no wonder that Elphinstone was nearly late for dinner—250 carefully considered words "giving expression to the sincere feeling of gratification and pleasure which Your Majesty's most gracious note has evoked."

We get one more sight, in Elphinstone's day-to-day recording, of the Queen in a mood gay and lighthearted.

"6th Feb. 1860.

. . . This evening there was a children's dance at the Duchess of Kent's. Many were there. . . . It is charming to see the Queen on these evenings, she enjoys the dance so thoroughly and looks as happy as any one of the children."

¹ Two words written one over the other.

CHAPTER VIII : THE ELDEST SON

THE Prince of Wales, now aged 18, with General Bruce and Lieut.-Colonel Keppel in attendance, had come to Osborne in the middle of December 1859. The friction between the Prince and his mother was already showing, and in this diary we see that one of the causes was merely that of the late development of the Prince's powers. General Bruce, speaking to Elphinstone at this time said :

"The difficulty which his tutor found was that though the thought lay there pregnant, the power to express it failed ; in fact that his knowledge of English was very imperfect."

Even at this early period Her Majesty was surprisingly open to Elphinstone in her remarks about the Prince of Wales. On January 6th he notes :

"I had an interview with the Queen. She said 'With the Prince of Wales . . . one had to contend with an unhappy temper, incapacity of concentrating his mind and defective mental qualities. Prince Arthur cannot be accused of having these failings ; he is on the contrary very bright with his answers. The Prince of Wales really *cannot* be made to *look* at a book unless during lessons. One cannot fix his attention even on a novel. In fact he would wish to be doing absolutely nothing whatever ; throw himself down upon a chair, or else on the good nature of others.'"

Among Elphinstone's papers is an extract of a letter written by the Queen to the Prince of Wales and also the Prince's reply. Possibly she sent these so that the contents could be passed on to Prince Arthur. In reading this letter from Her Majesty to her eldest son, it is interesting to remember that he was at the time in his twentieth year and a student at the University of Cambridge.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE, *June 2nd* 1861.

"MY DEAREST BERTIE,

. . . I had not an opportunity of saying something to you the other day, which I meant to do. As I may be prevented seeing you quietly when we meet next time, I will just write it in this letter. It is dear about your manner of sitting, and at meals in

general. It is *not* like dress, a matter of taste (you know I leave you quite to your own taste in *that respect*, and feel sure that you never would do anything extravagant or slangish). But you forget and have got into a habit of sitting quite bent, on one side, or lolling on the table, with your elbows and wrists while you eat, and leaning back as if you were eating in your *own* room after a great fatigue. This, dear child will NOT do for *any* person in your position, or any gentleman, and still less I am sure you never see it, even at your *own* table. When I look round at dear Uncle, Papa, Philip, Louis and indeed any of your relations or of our visitors, *I never* see anything of the sort, and I feel quite *pained* at what has the effect of ill breeding, or *nonchalance*, which I am *sure* is the very thing you would *not* intend or wish. . . .”

The Prince's reply could not have been more dutiful.

MADINGLEY, CAMBRIDGE, *June 4th '61.*

“MY DEAR MAMA,

Though I shall see you tomorrow, yet I send you a few lines to thank you for your last letter.

I am, of course always very thankful to receive any advice from you, and I shall always endeavour to take it in the way which it is meant ; I certainly was not aware that my manners at meals were not good, and I am very sorry that such is the case ; at any rate I hope that you will not think that they are meant badly, but when one is not thinking, habits grow upon one unintentionally.

I am glad that your journey to Town was prosperous, and that Louis is well again.

You must excuse this short letter, as I have to start for a Lecture, and with my love to Papa

I remain,
Your dutiful and affecte. son
BERTIE.”

One of the few sayings quoted of Elphinstone is upon the question of employment for the Prince after his father's death. A passage in Basset's *Life of Delane* says :

“Major Elphinstone, who was tutor of the Prince's younger brother, Arthur, put the situation in its true light when he remarked, ‘ If given occupation he (i.e. the Prince of Wales) will be sure to go right, but I fear the Queen is not disposed to let him interfere in public.’ ”

To return to Elphinstone's diary :

“*Jan. 19th, 1860.*

How prettily the Queen behaves to me. She called me to the corridor and spoke in so motherly a manner about the Prince of Wales and his education, and a day or two ago she called me out on to the terrace and had a long talk chiefly about Prince Leopold. She wished me to speak to Madame Hocié and explain my views of the manner of treating the boy, as she admitted that they seemed good. (I was pleased that so much confidence was placed in me, and at these moments one feels really devoted heart and soul to the Queen. This may seem vain, but it is natural ; when you see that your labours for others is duly appreciated it is *then* only that you get encouraged and proceed vigorously).

She spoke a long time of the Prince of Wales and the difficulty one had to manage him. ‘ Arthur on the contrary is an easily managed child. His temper is so good and he is so very obedient. The Prince of Wales was passionate and there was always the difficulty to find companions for him. He used to ill-treat and beat the boys that the parents, at least some of them, *refused* to send their children. The great difficulty with him was to fix his attention, and I almost think Mr. Gibbs did not improve it by the constant change in his amusements. They never used to take the same walk 2 days together, and were always making *different* expeditions to the neighbourhood. This constant change must have increased the inattention. But I believe Mr. Gibbs was fond of change himself? ’ ”

The Queen had much to say in the years to come on the subject of constant amusement, and she said it plainly.

CHAPTER IX : THE CLOSE OF A PERIOD

IN the early part of Elphinstone's diary his interest is focused on the Queen with the Prince Consort as a stern if not forbidding figure in the background with whom we seldom come into close contact. Towards the middle of 1860, however, it is of the Prince rather than Her Majesty that Elphinstone notes down scraps of daily intercourse and opinions, and though it is the Queen who

writes notes about Prince Arthur's doings, when the parents are away from home it is to her husband that Elphinstone makes his reports. Possibly Elphinstone's foreign education made understanding between the two men easy. By November 1860 we find that he was being used to deal with the correspondence concerning the gift of a military Library to Aldershot. Gradually Elphinstone was slipping into a sort of private military secretary to the Prince, who spoke openly to him about men and military subjects, gradually taking him into his confidence and using him for quite other purposes than for the education of a small boy. Had Prince Albert lived it looks as though Elphinstone's work might have followed a different course, for the letters were becoming more and more frequent that finish with the words

“ I have the honour to subscribe myself with the utmost respect
Your Royal Highness’
most devoted and obedient servant,
H. ELPHINSTONE.”

The last letter about the Aldershot library is dated only eight days before the Prince's death. We have only one letter, however, from him to Elphinstone. It is dry and dull, quite unlike the Queen's vivid style. Whatever power he possessed was not conveyed in his writing. But the admiration for the elder man became a vital factor in Elphinstone's later dealings with the Queen and her son.

There are various entries in the diary of 1860 referring to Prince Albert. In June at Buckingham Palace Elphinstone notes :

“ The Prince entered the room and as I was on the point of leaving he called me back to arrange about Prince Arthur's taking longer lessons in writing in which he is very backward. Then he commenced to play with the little Princess Beatrice ; took her on his knee and I was much struck with the affectionate manner in which he played with the child. . . .”

Another time Elphinstone writes :

“ . . . In speaking of Lord Raglan the Prince Consort said :
‘ He was a man I never liked because he was not sincere ; he always had a smiling face and pretended to agree with you, or at all events never ventured to differ, and you saw that the arguments he used were insincere, and that they were based more upon your own views. I never could feel comfortable with such a man.’

The Prince spoke most pointedly at me, whether it was meant or not I know not, but it certainly appeared to be so. . . .”

The following account of an expedition to Aldershot is of interest, for this road and the village of Bagshot were both to play a part in his future.

“*Tuesday, April 10th, 1860.*

We left Windsor this afternoon for Aldershot. None of the younger Princesses accompanied us, and Prince Arthur only because the Prince wished to speak to me about the Aldershot library, the building of which is finished and ready to receive the books. It was a desperately cold drive and I regretted much not having lots of wrappers. We went in four carriages at a splendid pace, although none but the Queen’s carriage were royal horses, and passing through Blackness gate, Bagshot and Frimley, not taking more than two hours to arrive at our destination. From Bagshot to Frimley almost the whole ground adjoining the road is taken up with nursery gardens, chiefly for fir trees to the growth of which the sandy soil must be very genial. The chief man in this trade along here is Mr. Waterer, who plants very extensively everywhere.”

It is well known that the Prince Consort did not often see eye to eye with the Prime Minister of that time, Lord Palmerston, but on one occasion they seem to have thought alike. The point in question referred to the protection of the dockyards of Portsmouth and Plymouth, and Elphinstone in his diary of 29th May, 1860, writes :

“The Prince sent for me to speak about the alterations made by the Committee on the project of the defence of England.

‘*Mr. Gladstone*, he said, objects to the defences and thinks that it is unconstitutional and dangerous to place so many fortresses in the hands of the Crown. To which *Lord Palmerston* replied that these very places had been fortified for upwards of 200 years. *Mr. Gladstone* said he would resign if the question were brought before the house by the Ministry, to which *Lord Palmerston* replied (in his letter to the Prince) that although he would regret losing him, he would regret far more the chance of losing Portsmouth and Plymouth.’”

During the last months of 1860 and most of 1861 Elphinstone wrote very little in his notebook. On March 16th, 1861, the Duchess of Kent died, the first of the two sorrows that were to fall

that year upon Her Majesty ; her last visit with her husband to Balmoral was clouded by this sorrow and on October 15th, 1861, she wrote :

“ The Queen cannot let Major Elphinstone’s letter of Thursday, just received remain unanswered a day. The kind *tender* feeling which prompted him to take our darling Arthur to that *hallowed* spot at Frogmore, which is so dear to her—and yet the vicinity of which will be so *very* trying to her, touched the Queen *very deeply* as well as the manner in which the Major alluded to it. It cost the Queen much to see her dear little pet go away *all alone* for the 1st time in his little life, but the telegram and Major Elphinstone’s letter have been a great comfort.

Alas ! the time for leaving this dear place draws nearer, and the Queen owns that she dreads the return to Windsor, with *that empty* house, where a beloved mother used to live and *ever* to welcome her children and grandchildren back, more than words *can* describe.”

There is little more of interest in this diary till we come to the tragic day of December 14, 1861. Then Elphinstone gives us a narrative of the evening on which fell the blow that was to transform the Queen’s existence and to usher in a long period of mourning.

“ *Saturday, December 14, 1861.*

Friday night 11.15. Du Plat came to my room. He had been telegraphed for and said that the Prince of Wales was expected that night. It was the first time I had felt any alarm about the Prince Consort. But this looked so serious that I first saw Ruland and then went up to enquire. The report was unsatisfactory and the whole of the next day I felt some presentiment and I forbade Prince Arthur to play about much or make a noise. We had hardly returned at 5.0 p.m. when by the Queen’s wish, the little fellow went upstairs to see the Prince Consort. He came down shocked ; the face had so changed since he saw him last about six days ago. I was afraid all hope was gone, yet I would not believe it possible that so great a calamity would visit the Queen, and Ruland and I, while dining quietly together in our own rooms (having discarded Captain Ross) argued ourselves up into the same belief. An unaccountable feeling at length induced me to go into the corridor. I shall never forget the few hours I spent there. The old corridor with its historical pictures, busts of great

men and bijouteries, usually the scene of many a gay chat of household members before going or after having been to dinner, presented now a very dim aspect. A few gloomy faces, fearing the worst, were patiently sitting and anxiously watching each doctor's face as they came from the Prince's room. But each report was different, and hope and despair were alternatively dealt out, that no one could form an idea of the truth. At last Sir James Clark and Dr. Jenner were suddenly sent for, and they had been absent but half an hour. We knew now that it was past hope, and heard shortly after that it was all over.

One after another we were called in ; first Phipps, then Bruce, then Lord Alfred, Ruland, Seymour, the Dean, Grey, Du Plat, Biddulph and lastly I. It took me aback. I expected to see the Prince's body. I saw instead the Queen lying on the sofa, at her side on the floor Princess Alice supporting her ; behind her Princess Helena sobbing violently. The Prince of Wales just hiding the Princess Leiningen, stood at the front of the sofa, deeply affected but quiet. I was so unprepared for this that I hesitated, almost retreated, until the voice of the Queen and her outstretched hand called me to my senses and I went forward, but unable to speak ; at last clutching my hand and with a violent effort she ejaculated :

‘ You will not desert me ? You will all help me ? ’

I was deeply moved and answered a few words from the depths of my heart, and retired, not forgetting to return the gentle pressure of the Prince of Wales's ‘ Handdruck.’ The Prince was lying in the next room ; his face calm, peaceful. He had gone without a struggle, but likewise without saying a word. Beautiful noble head it appeared. He died in the same room as King William IV. A few days before the latter circumstance occurred to him, and he drew the inference that he would end his days here. The doctors moved him into it as it was more airy than his own room and the nearest to it.

The Prince always had a fixed idea that he would die of the first fever he got. It proved true, although I daresay that this presentiment might have accelerated it as he never even tried to rally from the moment the illness commenced. About a week before he told Princess Alice that he would die. And then in that feeble state recurred to him the scenes of childhood, which he wished to see again, to hear the birds twittering about the woods at Coburg, and be again in his warmhearted home, away from the frigidity of England.”

CHAPTER X : GRIEF

ONE is apt to forget that the Queen was only 42 when the Prince Consort died. Only the year before Elphinstone had written of her as enjoying a children's dance as much as any of her family. From now onwards the picture of her life was to be framed in black. Six weeks after her loss she wrote to Elphinstone thanking him for an account of her two youngest sons.

OSBORNE, *Jan.* 31, '62.

"This letter has much gratified the Queen, though the constant and ever recurring distress of not being able to impart it to her beloved husband whose fearful loss is *daily* wearing her out more and more, makes *all* good news a pain.

Tho' she thinks *she* never will see Prince Leopold grown up, she rejoices to think if he is spared *how much* he may resemble his precious father in character—in many of the qualities at least and feels that he may go on with *His* work.

The Queen's precious Prince surely sees his dear little boy whom he was anxious for, and blesses and loves him."

Early in March Her Majesty returned to Windsor for the first time since the Prince's death, and Elphinstone wrote :

OSBORNE, 7 *March*, '62.

"Major Elphinstone presents his most humble duty to Your Majesty.

He fears that he is intruding almost too soon upon the first overwhelming anguish which a visit to Windsor could not fail to produce, and which Your Majesty's two telegrams but too clearly indicated, and yet he hopes that some account of Prince Arthur and of his welfare may even soothe, by momentarily diverting the mind from thoughts which are too freshly re-awakened to leave room for aught but anguish and deep suffering. May these first feelings soon pass away he most sincerely prays for."

Her Majesty answered :

WINDSOR CASTLE, *March* 11, 1862.

"The Queen thanks Major Elphinstone for his 2 kind letters. Her *grief* and *anguish* are *indeed* INDESCRIBABLE and can only *end* with *THIS* *life*.

Poor darling Arthur the Queen misses much. The *silence below* added to the *awful silence* nearby, is *very* painful.

She wishes the dear child should *not* be lonely—and she is sure that the Major will *often* talk to him of his adored Papa and his broken-hearted Mama.

The Queen finds it damper and more relaxing here, far, than at Osborne. She misses the sea air and the sea very much. . . . The accounts of dear Arthur are very cheering, but *all* that would cheer her is mixed with anguish and grief, as she can't impart it now to her Darling Lord. . . .”

When his father died Prince Leopold, aged 8, was in the South of France, and Elphinstone received a letter from him in which thanks for the gift of a new book rather swamps the sorrow about Prince Albert. Lying alongside this letter was one from Prince Arthur, undated but almost certainly written during those anxious December days, saying: “Dear Major, Please come and say goodnight to me.—ARTHUR.” On Prince Leopold's return to England in April, Her Majesty wrote:

“The Queen wishes Major Elphinstone to take care and make poor little Leopold understand that his return will be a very sad one, that he comes back to a House of Mourning and that his poor broken-hearted Mother cannot bear noise, excitement, etc.

In short the Queen knows Major Elphinstone's kind heart and *delicacy* of feeling sufficiently not to require any *further* directions on this subject from her.

Prince Arthur wrote the Queen such a nice letter. Is it quite his own?”

“Major Elphinstone is glad to say that Prince Arthur's letter was entirely his own,” came the reply.

To the boy himself she wrote shortly after, telling him to thank “your excellent Major” for some letters: “. . . and tell him how much I felt ALL he said about your adored Papa, and HOW much I FELT all his kind sympathy in my *terrible* grief! With so kind a friend as dear Major—who watches over you so tenderly and who will constantly remind you of *your* terrible loss—I feel you are *as safe* as *our* fond hearts could wish. . . . This letter is also for Major Elphinstone.”

The physical effort of writing was nothing apparently to the Queen. At what hour of the morning did she send the following?

OSBORNE, *April 11, 1862.*

"The Queen could see Major Elphinstone with plans for Prince Arthur *this morning* at a little before or at 11. She will send again when she is quite ready to see him.

The Queen wishes to say—that while she has but *one* object in view viz.: the good of our children and their success in life as good moral and distinguished people, she is anxious NOT to *separate* herself *more* from them than is *absolutely necessary*, as *now* that God has taken their adored Father away who *united everything* requisite to attach them to Home, to command respect and whose example was and is like a *bright light* shining forth to all eternity—the Queen wishes her boys, especially the young ones, to become very intimate with her and to *imbibe* the views and habits entertained by both of us."

On November 16, 1862, from Windsor she wrote :

"The Queen cannot leave *so* kind a letter as the one she has received this morning unanswered, and must express to Major Elphinstone how deeply she feels his kind sympathy.

In the midst of *grief* so overwhelming and a loss so dreadful as hers, there is nothing so soothing than to see that *others*, and others in Major Elphinstone's position, *understand* her sufferings, struggles and trials ; the Queen thanks him *very* much, and most sincerely for his letter. . . .

She now wishes to write to Major Elphinstone upon a subject which she was intending writing to him about already some days ago.

It is that the Queen finds that the beloved Prince wrote on the 14th December 1859 to Major Elphinstone asking him to continue to take charge of Prince Arthur's education, to which probably Prince Leopold's would be added, till the close of the year '62. This time has now arrived, and the Queen now writes what her precious Angel would have written, and alas what *she now* does, but in BOTH our names, to say *how* entirely we were satisfied with Major Elphinstone's zeal and devotion and judicious management of our Dear Boys, and to ask him to continue for 4 years more, that is to say till the end of the year '66, if D.V. Arthur and Leopold should (as the Queen trusts and prays they may be alive at that time tho' she doubts (and *SHE* hopes) she may no longer be in this World) in his present position as Governor to the 2 Princes..

The Queen has *written* instructions by which in case of her

death, the Guardians of our Children will be informed that it is her wish that all those devoted and admirable people who are charged with the education of our Children—should continue about them (which she trusts they would all consent to do).

The Queen says 4 years as she thinks it may be more easy and agreeable for all parties not to be *bound* for a longer period *beforehand*. But the Queen trusts that Major Elphinstone will not be disinclined to continue for a far longer period in our service. More than ever, now, in the Queen's desolation and helpless position does she require the assistance of such a kind and devoted friend as Major Elphinstone.

The Queen hopes Major Elphinstone will not scruple from time to time to ask for leave, so as to have some rest occasionally ! !

She trusts he will be able to accept the Queen's proposal—which she makes in her precious Husband's name as well as in her own, as she knows what *he* felt on this subject and the Queen knows how sacred to all those who knew Him are His wishes."

Nearly two years after the Prince's death she wrote :

" . . . God knows, sympathy *no one* ever experienced as she did, from the whole nation, but it is in the *personal* and *daily* contact, that in *high* and *low*, a *true* sympathy and appreciation of her sufferings (*these* are *not* always properly understood by the public) that the Queen experiences its soothing effect and it is this she longs for in her Children and finds in *some* of them to so great an extent. Major Elphinstone hopes for less depression of spirits but she feels this can *never never* be ; on the contrary as time goes on and *others* feel *less*, *her* deep settled melancholy—her ever increasing helplessness and loneliness are *more keenly* and acutely felt. The struggle gets daily worse, the want *hourly more felt*, her shaken health and shattered nerves less able to bear the trials and work and sorrow and above all the desolation. . . .

She hopes Major Elphinstone spares his sprained ankle."

Answering, Elphinstone writes a very understanding letter, ending :

" . . . No one requires this true sympathy more than Your Majesty, who from Your very exalted position is deprived of all that soothing consolation which ' friends ' and equals afford to others, a want which must redouble the sense of loneliness. . . ."

Perhaps it was Elphinstone's devotion to his mother, whose

sorrowing attitude to life seems to have had no special cause, that made him sympathise with Her Majesty's genuine grief and show this when others were probably losing patience with the prolonged mourning. She was evidently touched by his answer, and from now onwards hers to him are no longer mere notes, but letters to a friend.

So the years of mourning went by, punctuated by precious anniversaries that even after fifteen years were not allowed to pass without special letters of condolence.

CHAPTER XI: THE UPBRINGING OF A PRINCE

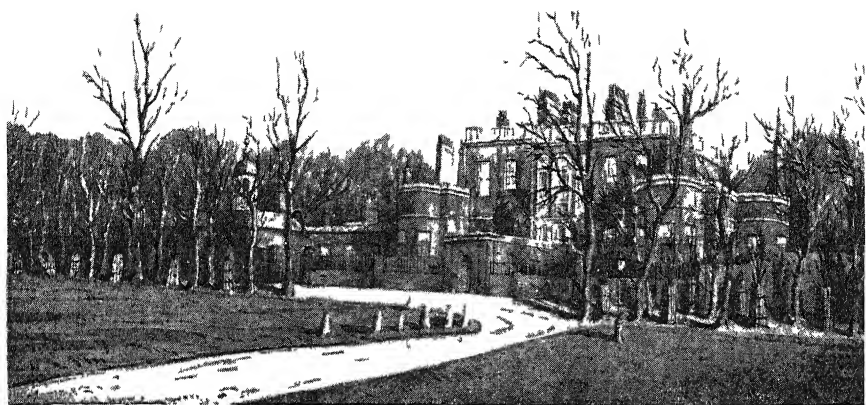
THE plans for Prince Arthur's future had to be faced, mourning or no mourning. That he should leave home and live at the Ranger's House, Blackheath, must either have been the Prince Consort's idea or have received his sanction; otherwise Elphinstone could hardly have carried it out in the face of the Queen's half-hearted approval. By now he realised not only the bad effect of court life upon the boy's character—a point which later he put plainly before Her Majesty—but also how wrong for a child was this atmosphere of gloom. In spite of memoranda from the Queen, he gained his way and in the autumn of 1862 Prince Arthur with Elphinstone as comptroller, Mr. Jolley as tutor, and Collins, the valet, went to live at the Ranger's House just inside Greenwich Park. The first letter after their arrival notes that "Each room has a thermometer and Major Elphinstone will see that 60° is never exceeded. . . . He will report every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday."

These and other details evidently allayed the Queen's anxiety, for she writes a few days later :

OSBORNE, Nov. 14, 1862.

"The Queen thanks Major Elphinstone much for his letter and the very satisfactory account of our dear little Arthur. The Queen hopes the music will be got up again and earnestly urges the drawing lessons.

When Prince Arthur *once* has begun coming for the Sunday,



Rangers House, Greenwich
From sketches by Sir Howard Elphinstone



The Alpine Castle of Tarasp
From a sketch by Sir Howard Elphinstone

the Queen would *wish* that practise to be *regularly* adopted while she is at Windsor.

He can come ever so late on Saturday and return ever so early on Mondays. If this is adopted the Queen can have no objection whatever to Prince Arthur's lengthened stay at Blackheath."

Greenwich remained Prince Arthur's headquarters for nearly nine years ; not till the summer of 1871 did they say good-bye to the place. Sometimes they visited or toured in England or on the Continent and twelve months of the time was spent in Canada. But for long periods on end they never left the Ranger's House.

During these years Elphinstone's energies were concentrated on the upbringing of the Prince. He was not only to be given sufficient learning to enable him to pass into the Royal Academy at Woolwich in open competition with other boys, but he had to be fitted morally for the part he was to play as a Prince of Great Britain ; a part Her Majesty determined should be very different from that of her uncles, or even of his two elder brothers. Also he must continue successfully to fill that place in the Queen's life which was so near to her heart and where none of his brothers and sisters ever quite succeeded in joining him.

They were dull years of monotonous routine. The work for Elphinstone never ceased either day or night ; but it was work that in no way gave his powers full play and one cannot but feel that he looked at times with envy at some of his fellow soldiers and contemporaries who were at more interesting posts in different parts of the world. For a man whose choice of a career was not that of a schoolmaster it was an irksome life. The years were punctuated by anniversaries, mostly tragic, which must never be forgotten and which necessitated the writing of long appropriate letters. During all this period it was in theory Elphinstone's duty to write three times a week to the Queen giving her a report on Prince Arthur's doings. In actual fact he wrote far more often, for on any special occasion, while they travelled or in times of illness, letters were sent to Her Majesty sometimes twice a day, often written in the late hours round midnight or the early dawn.

Prince Arthur's studies were Mr. Jolley's duty ; but the important part of the boy's upbringing had nothing to do with lessons. Elphinstone did not make the mistake of confusing

education with book learning ; not a mere clerkly knowledge of facts but the formation of a fine character was his aim. The Queen's ideal for her son was no mean one. His natural kindness must not be spoiled by selfishness or cynicism ; he must ever put the welfare of others before his own and realise that as a prince his life would not be one of mere pleasure but of service to his country. A broad outlook for the higher qualities needed in life was Elphinstone's object, and these years were vital to the formation of the Prince's character.

13 July 1866.

" . . . So far as Prince Arthur is concerned, Major Elphinstone can only again assure Your Majesty that as far as he is able he will never fail to instil those principles of kindly feeling and affection on which Your Majesty, and with justice, lays so much stress.—That tender sympathy for others and true goodness of heart which every highborn gentleman ought to have, can never destroy manliness, but on the contrary, only raises and ennobles his character and produces moral qualities of a kind which may perhaps not be appreciated by many, but only because they are qualities above their comprehension."

Elphinstone considered that " true nobility of character was the end and aim of education " and that " The first qualities to acquire are honesty of purpose and nobleness of spirit and that without these he will never be respected " and that

" . . . Fortunately Prince Arthur possesses an essential quality : kindness. . . . But the Prince from his position will always labour under disadvantages ; everybody shows so great a consideration for *him*. . . ."

On January 30, 1863, Her Majesty wrote :

" The Queen thanks Major Elphinstone for his regular and pleasing reports of our darling Arthur. The only things the Queen always fears, are lest living so much . . . away from home he should become a *stranger* to that sad and fatherless home and be as *reserved* as alas, for the last 6 or 7 years our elder sons have been and still are. She is so anxious that Prince Arthur should be very confidential and open with her, and never fear to say or ask anything. She says all this openly to Major Elphinstone as she is so anxious that our child's *confidence* should be *made* to *her* and to *himself* . . ."

Elphinstone replied that he was convinced that being at Greenwich would not increase the boy's self-importance so much as being at Court

"where deference and even admiration is shown to him daily, nay hourly. . . . Here on the contrary he walks about without being taken notice of, frequently jostled by workmen returning to their work; and sometimes too he sees with regret that he likewise cannot join those joyous games of other boys on the Common. . . ."

Elphinstone considered that confidence between a child and his parents was of vital importance to rectitude of character and :

"he has always followed this principle : that whatever punishment the Princes received, that *he* was the one who ordered it, whereas every reward, however trifling, has invariably been represented as coming direct from Your Majesty, so that your name should be associated with everything pleasing or affectionate and that terror should be banished from such feelings."

It is amusing to see how this last point was dealt with in practice. Elphinstone wrote from Greenwich :

". . . Prince Arthur has just received from Messrs. Garrard the two teeth of the stag which he shot. They have been made into a very pretty brooch, forming a butterfly, and which he intended to give to Princess Louise at Christmas. He had been told at Balmoral that the expense of so doing would not exceed what he could afford out of his very small allowance of pocket money. It is unnecessary to state that the allowance is not sufficient to cover the expense, although very little in itself. Major Elphinstone thinks this so good an opportunity of teaching Prince Arthur to confide his little troubles and pleasures to Your Majesty, it will tend to increase the natural bonds of affection : that he has directed Prince Arthur to speak to Your Majesty and to ask Your assistance."

Elphinstone assures the Queen that the steady application to work was being successful. . . . "But Your Majesty must not therefore consider that he is unhappy here. Far from it. He enjoys himself greatly and is full of fun and laughter." Every effort was made that education should be absorbed unknown. London was near enough for museums and exhibitions to be visited and life was not entirely made up of lessons. The Crystal Palace, that creation of the Beloved Prince, had been moved

from its original home in Hyde Park to within easy driving distance of Greenwich, and many afternoons were spent there by the boy and his governor, not always in study. "When Prince Arthur approached the spot where a machine was in motion for which no other name can be found but that of the 'merry-go-round,' he became so anxious, and begged so hard to be allowed to try it, that Major Elphinstone, judging from the class of people there, the small set present at that moment, and the circumstances that the Prince was not known by *anyone*, at last gave leave, as he thought that Your Majesty would not object, the circumstance not being likely to occur again. . . ." Her Majesty answered :

OSBORNE, *Jan.* 13, 1863.

"The Queen thanks Major Elphinstone for three very satisfactory letters and she is *much* rejoiced that our dear little Darling was so much amused at the Crystal Palace, as she knows how much the beloved Prince would rejoice at his dear Children being happy."

Games were a difficulty. During those early years the Prince's young companions were few, and those few carefully selected.

"A small number likewise is apt to create a closer intimacy than might be advisable at Prince Arthur's present age unless one is *perfectly* acquainted with the character of the boys. . . . On Thursday last a game of football was played with Mr. Jolley and in default of boys, several of the servants joined. They were all of Your Majesty's establishment and most respectable men from whom, in such an exceptional case, no harm could be learnt."

There was plenty of physical exercise during the years at Greenwich. There were gymnastics and fencing with instructors from Woolwich. There was riding and some jumping over fences in the park, and when the weather permitted enjoyable games of hockey on the ice. There was work felling trees in the garden and building bonfires for Guy Fawkes Day, with "a most elegantly dressed Guy" and a good assortment of fireworks. We hear of Christmas trees and of their introduction into England. Prince Arthur went to see an entertainment given to nearly a thousand children of the artillery soldiers at Woolwich, where a number of trees were illuminated and laden

with presents and a description of the scene is sent to Osborne. In her answer Her Majesty says :

OSBORNE, *Jan.* 16, 1865.

“ . . . The Christmas trees for the Artillery soldiers children pleases her much also, and she rejoices to think that the Prince and herself are the source of Christmas trees being so generally adopted in this country. . . .”

Not many books are mentioned, but we do occasionally hear of some reading ; this generally took the form of travel books. “ Speke’s most voluminous account is now almost completed without a single passage having been omitted. At every spare moment Prince Arthur will rush to the book and read with avidity. Major Elphinstone is trying to get for him McClintock’s account in search of Sir J. Franklin.” (This mention of their other grandfather’s book is of interest to the writer’s children.)

Religion was not a mere question of Sunday observance but the vital foundation of life. Sunday was by no means allowed to be the day of gloom that it was in so many British households at that time. From Windsor Castle, on November 23, 1862, Her Majesty wrote :

“ In the course of conversation (not *at all* as a complaint) the Queen heard from Prince Arthur that Mr. Jolley again gives him religious *lessons* on a *Sunday*. Major Elphinstone will recollect that we objected to this about 2 years ago and the Queen thinks that as the service he attends is long, a lesson *besides* (which none of the others used to have) would be better *avoided*. If Major Elphinstone would turn Prince Arthur’s attention to religious subjects whenever he can and bring them into everyday life, she would be very glad, and this could be done also of course on Sundays. But *Sunday lessons when* the children are old enough to go to Church, the Queen and the Prince objected to. She would wish, therefore, if Major Elphinstone could manage that *once* a week the *Ancient History* lesson were to be devoted instead to *religion*.”

The Sunday morning service was attended as a matter of course, and when through illness or other cause this was not done, prayers were read at home instead. Elphinstone, never himself a great lover of sermons, used these for training the boy’s memory and after some practice he could give an accurate account of what he had heard. We also hear of “ a great im-

provement" at Greenwich by the vicar limiting the length of the sermon, "which formerly used to extend over an hour, which rendered the entire service very long and even tedious." Though Her Majesty disapproved of Sunday travel it was not from her own point of view, but because it gave offence to others, and when the boy came to Windsor for week-ends for this reason only he was not allowed to return to Greenwich on the Sunday night.

There are at Windsor Castle two sketches by Elphinstone of the Ranger's House, some of the conscientious work he did at this period; these, by gracious permission of His Majesty, are here reproduced. Sketches frequently accompanied the reports to the Queen. Often he apologises for their roughness and inadequacy, but they must have been a pleasant contrast to some of the dreary details dealt with by Her Majesty. She writes:

Jan. 14, '63.

"The Queen thanks Major Elphinstone for his letters of yesterday and the charming Drawings which remind the Queen of having seen the old House when she was a little girl herself. . . ."

That the boy was far from perfect Elphinstone did not attempt to hide from Her Majesty. Indeed it is surprising how openly at times he discusses the faults in character with her. This gave his praise its full value.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *Nov. 10, 1863.*

"The Queen thanks Major Elphinstone for *all* his reports, which upon the whole are as satisfactory as upon the whole can be expected.

She is *most* anxious that Major Elphinstone should *impress* all she wrote to Prince Arthur upon him, viz. not only honesty and goodness, but *also* that he should avoid all *slang* or fast propensities, all 'John Bullism' and that he should understand the great necessity for kindness (undecipherable) (Major Elphinstone knows what that means) and *sympathy* for the sorrows and feelings of others.

To the poor Queen this is almost a *vital* point and she dwelt strongly on it to Prince Arthur, mentioning how soothing and touching it was to find it so strongly and touchingly evinced in the simple true-hearted and noble Highlanders!"

Answering next day, Elphinstone says:

"Your Majesty must make allowances. . . . It is difficult to conceive where Prince Arthur learns 'slang' expressions. . . . Major Elphinstone trusts, however, that Your Majesty will not look too seriously upon these offences. They are—at least in Prince Arthur's case—nothing more than the first outbursts of a high-spirited boy, and like the first leaves of a young plant are sure to disappear in a short time, as soon as 'reason' is brought to bear and that he sees it is disapproved of by those he esteems. The tendency for what Your Majesty so expressively calls 'John Bullism' will require more care, and shall be attended to. It, however, will likewise disappear, by seeing something more of the world; especially by travelling abroad. So many things are better abroad, especially the climate, that unless a *bias* be given, all such exaggerations will vanish of themselves. In fact travelling on the continent is the most effectual way of silencing this."

So the months went by—lessons at the Ranger's House, initiation into a sporting life at Balmoral and some subdued enjoyment at Osborne or Windsor at Christmas or for birthdays. There were difficulties in the holidays to ensure that the children did really have some fun in spite of the atmosphere of mourning, and the following note was handed to Elphinstone one evening at dinner after New Year festivities at Osborne.

OSBORNE, Jan. 2, '65.

"The Queen is *most* anxious to express to Major Elphinstone, Col. Du Plat and the dear Children, that *if* she appeared *listless* and did *not* applaud, it was only because the recollections of the *happy past* when the beloved Prince arranged everything—running backwards and forwards, approving, consulting, applauding—weighed her down and it was *ALL* she could do to sit thro' it! Prince Arthur was *excellent* and would have delighted his darling Papa. Prince Leopold spoke *too* low and was not 'bonny enough' and is inclined to turn his *back* to the *audience*. Poor Albert Grey (in confidence be it said) is a *stick*, but he knew his part quite well.

But the whole was *very* SUCCESSFUL."

CHAPTER XII : A GERMAN FAIRY TALE

ELPHINSTONE'S first visit to Saxe-Coburg and Gotha was in the autumn of 1862, when Her Majesty and her younger children went to Germany for a few weeks.

The tale of this visit seems told in the nursery—a story from Grimm or a rhyme sung in the autumn sunshine ; from the first anxious letter about suitable underclothes for Prince Arthur and Prince Leopold upon their long journey, to Her Majesty's injunctions that the wise magician of the land should be consulted about the children's future.

We are given the key to the melody on the day they started, for they left the shores of England in a boat named the *Fairy*. The first person they encountered on their way was one of the most beautiful princesses of all time—Alexandra of Denmark ; and we are told of roses bought by the two small boys in the old grey market square just beyond Ste. Gudule, whose houses are outlined with gold. But the Queen wrote from the Palace of Laeken, "the little Princes seem not to have suspected their brother's marriage." After that they came to a land of castles ; some, whose creamy pink walls and towers lie half-buried among dark trees ; among these woods lie quiet pools with stately swans cutting across the still reflections ; here one may dream of water nymphs and dryads. But there were other castles perched high upon rocky crags, which merely to look at seem to raise the sound of a clash of arms, of sharp spearhead glancing off armour, of battle-cries and the tearing noise of destruction. There were also toy villages with cottages that might have been made of gingerbread coated with pink and yellow icing. There were peasants in fancy dress, who danced at country fairs, for all the world like dolls upon a musical-box. There were storks perched upon the roof-tops ; small boys were fat and smiling and small girls were plump and had long pigtails. Were these things real—or if one broke off a piece to nibble would it taste of chocolate and sugar ? There was as yet hardly a hint of any ogre in the land.

All this is clearly recorded in large coloured picture books at Windsor Castle ; in these huge volumes bound in sweet-scented red leather upon which are stamped golden monograms are water colours bright and gay. We can see the green trees and the pink houses, the cheerful flower-beds in the gardens, and we can even

look inside the castles, much as one can open the door of a doll's-house to examine the rooms. We find that the Schloss of that period held only a Spartan comfort. There is hard wooden furniture standing upon highly polished parquet floors without a hint of carpet or rug. Upon these nobbly wooden chairs are no cushions or upholstery to soften the angles and upon the tables lie no books or flowers. The colouring has been chosen by a child enjoying a new paint-box and with the pictures of Struwwelpeter fresh in mind; for the walls are either chocolate brown with curtains of Reckitts blue and scarlet, or the plaster is enamelled a virulent green distinctly dazzling to the eye. It is easy to imagine Augustus's self-denial or Harriet lighting her little bonfire in such rooms.

From Rheinhartsbrunn, where they first stayed, the Queen sent Elphinstone a note about Prince Arthur and Prince Leopold visiting Coburg and what they must see there, the palace and the museum, etc., the tombs of their ancestors and also a toy factory which the Prince Consort used often to visit; here they saw hundreds of toys of all kinds, such as only the kindly German of those days knew how to make, dolls with golden hair and dolls with dark hair, soldiers and wooden horses and carts and castles, everything to make glad the heart of a child.

They went also further afield than Coburg. Towards the end of September, Prince Arthur travelled with Elphinstone and Colonel du Plat, one of Her Majesty's gentlemen, to the Harz Mountains. Elphinstone, with his foreign upbringing, seemed to have understood a continental landscape better than he ever did the less formal beauty of England. The great sweep of hills guarding a winding valley; the immaculately tidy farm land climbing to dark, equally tidy, forests of beech and spruce; and above all this the high rocks from which can be seen a vast panorama of distant hills and from where it is possible to look at the world as from a magic carpet, understanding the contours of the land, glancing into deep valleys and seeing the roofs of little villages and churches. There is a brilliancy of sunlight and vividness of colour quite unlike the cool tones of England and with which he felt more at home. Scarlet geraniums mix happily with livid magenta petunias in window-boxes of houses whose walls are washed in lemon colour and whose doors are painted emerald or jade. His Russian ancestry showed in his love of colour.

The weather was fine, the Queen's proverbial days of warm

sunshine that gradually changed the countryside from a land of dusty green into a world of gold, as leaf after leaf, and tree after tree turned amber, saffron and orange. The harvest was gathered in over the immense fields, and after a day's expedition the three travellers could watch the setting sun burnish the figures of busy peasant folk working among the fruit trees, while branches of ripe plums suddenly turned into heavy-laden strings of glowing rubies. They visited some of the Prince's royal relations and Grand Ducal friends in palaces whose windows looked out over glassy rivers reflecting distant mountains and well-cared-for trees ; they went to shooting lodges which had deal floors, no carpets and little furniture and where " the kitchen was atrocious, a den of filth." At another place they slept at an inn " abominably dirty, the sheets wet, a perfect pot house." One quality which to-day we unhesitatingly accord to Germany she then seemed not to possess, that of cleanliness. Again and again in his diary Elphinstone comments upon the dirt of the people ; one village whose houses were all built of wood was inhabited by dependants of the local Duke, yet the habitations were all " miserable and without modern improvements." The town of Gotha was terribly dirty. When they got away from Thuringia matters were rather better, the people looking less poverty-stricken and their houses cleaner, while the women for a change " actually wash ! " Their lovely peasant dresses at Coburg were too dirty to look beautiful, Elphinstone considered, when he and several members of the Household visited the local fair.

On this expedition sometimes they went by coach, the boy interested in the variety of uniforms worn by the ostlers and coachmen ; sometimes they walked with a small mule as companion if the way was long and tiring. But Elphinstone had more than mere sightseeing in mind. Summing up the tour, he writes to the boy's mother :

" Above all he has been forced to speak German ; he has been obliged to put up with a great many discomforts and he has been forced to get over that daintiness in food which Your Majesty is aware he has got to an extraordinary degree and which unless conquered soon will cause him much misery in after life during his soldier's career.

The Prince was known everywhere notwithstanding the precautions taken ; but contrary to the custom in England, the people behaved admirably. They took little notice of him and

allowed him to pass without crowding. Major Elphinstone, for all these circumstances, has great reason to be satisfied with this tour. The Prince has seen something of the world without having his vanity affected, which it invariably is in any tour that he can make in England. Major Elphinstone cannot close without saying of what great assistance Colonel du Plat has been ; he watched over the Prince quite as carefully and constantly as Major Elphinstone could have done, and by every means tried to fix the Prince's attention and force him to speak German."

The first of many foreign tours taken by Prince Arthur with Elphinstone in attendance had been a success.

One place in this land was sacred to the Queen, upon which no breath of criticism must ever fall—the Rosenau. Here the Prince Consort had been born and had spent much of his youth.

This house stood upon a wooded knoll above a sylvan countryside of stream and forest ; in the grounds were formal fountains and temples and all the fancies of the eighteenth century ; the building with its huge sweep of roof and stepped Dutch gable had shuttered windows looking out on to poplars standing beside it, as if guarding the place from intrusion.

Her Majesty wrote from Coburg to Elphinstone about his expedition :

"The Queen thanks Major Elphinstone so much for his *interesting* letters. All seems most successful.

Major Elphinstone may imagine *what* it is to the Queen to be in this beloved place, where the very air seems to breathe of her precious one. She wishes Prince Arthur to go with her to Church at the Kallenberg tomorrow at 10. She wishes him *not* to go to the Rosenau *before* she takes him herself."

A few days later she wrote :

Oct. 8, 1862.

"The Queen is anxious that the two Princes should visit Baron Stockmar several times ; . . . Major Elphinstone knows what a great friend Baron Stockmar has ever been of ours, and how much the Prince and Queen consulted him upon everything. She is therefore anxious that Major Elphinstone should have some opportunity of talking to him, (without the Princes) of Prince Arthur's education and his future, and hearing his opinion, which is always most wise,"

Her wishes were obeyed. Elphinstone replied the same day :

" . . . He called on Baron Stockmar this forenoon with Prince Arthur, and he can honestly state that he has seldom been so deeply impressed by a first visit as during his short interview with the Baron. Such perfect goodness one does not often see united with such wisdom and consummate knowledge of the world.

Major Elphinstone was charmed with his visit and he will *certainly* not fail to see the Baron frequently and consult him on Prince Arthur's education."

Less than a year later the Baron was dead. Elphinstone telegraphed to Her Majesty on July 9, 1863 :

" Truly grieved to hear of sad loss and humbly sympathise with your Majesty. So bright an intellect combined with perfect honesty is seldom seen."

And the Queen's answer to him is dated the following day from Osborne at 11 p.m., telling how she received news of the death of " this invaluable friend, who was to both of us a *father*, and to whom we owed more than words can ever express, and who was the repository of our mutual thoughts and feelings.

He was so identified with *our* lives, and with the Queen's from her *birth* that she *cannot realise* his being *no more on earth*, any more than that her precious Husband *will* not return to her on Earth ! The loss is *terrible* to the Queen. The one sustaining thought to the Queen is the *reunion* of two *such* beings in brighter regions who were so united already on Earth ! "

Was the tale that we have been reading a dream ? If so, it had been brushed by a nightmare and the story had somehow gone wrong ; for the wise magician and the fairy Prince were now both dead. Forgetfulness would blur the outline of the gingerbread house and the land was presently to be ruled by an ogre.

CHAPTER XIII : THE COBURG SUCCESSION

WHEN in 1840 Queen Victoria married Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, she was marrying the younger of two brothers. As time went on and it became probable that the

elder brother Prince Ernest would leave no heir to the Dukedom, Prince Albert and the Queen were faced with a problem to which there was no obvious solution. Their eldest son would become King of England. Their second son, Prince Alfred, was serving in the British Navy. For Prince Arthur a military career was being planned in which he should follow in the steps of his godfather and of his uncle, the Dukes of Wellington and Cambridge. Prince Leopold was delicate and might not grow to manhood.

The possibility of Prince Arthur being chosen to succeed to the Duchies was thus manifest and it created an important factor in regard to his future education. In the opinion of Queen Victoria it became essential that he should not be too British or insular in his ideas. The situation was not eased by events in Europe. In 1864 the Schleswig-Holstein question, that most complicated of conundrums, gave Bismarck a pretext for launching, against Denmark, the first of Germany's five wars of aggression within living memory. This caused repercussions even at the Ranger's House. The Queen's sympathies were intensely Prussian, whereas feeling in England and in particular with the Prince of Wales, whose marriage to Princess Alexandra had recently taken place, was on the side of Denmark. The Duke of Coburg, unlike many of the small German princes, was strongly in favour of Prussia, an unfortunate fact that made it all the more important that Prince Arthur should not grow up with an anti-German bias.

A great number of letters passed concerning Prince Arthur's German education, showing what care the Queen gave to the matter, "training our darling boy, as it were imperceptibly, for the very probable position he may have to fill," and with what forethought every detail was planned by Elphinstone. He himself did not attempt to hide his own point of view about Prussia, but

"Your Majesty may rest assured that he will never allow any personal feelings to interfere should they tend to deprecate Germany. . . . Major Elphinstone sees clearly his duty and will follow it strictly."

Obviously the boy must spend considerable time at Coburg.

Elphinstone wrote apologising for an extremely long letter about the boy's education, and his own anxiety that she should realise nothing should occur which would ". . . tend to foster such an antipathy to German customs or to Germany as that which Prince Alfred's peculiar education on board a man of war could

not fail to impart. . . ." Elphinstone's own knowledge of German manners, language and literature would help him to prevent an anti-German outlook. But that the Prince should enjoy his visits to Coburg, he suggests that the boy should have some companions of his own age, companions who should be German ; and that the visits to the Duchies should never be too long, " so as not to exhaust the amusements of the place and thus always to leave a pleasant recollection." In view of the coming visit, the history and geography lessons were all about Germany. The war against Denmark was not ignored. Writing later to the Queen a letter of sympathy on the personal difficulties that the situation was creating for her, with her children on opposite sides in the conflict, he continues :

" . . . However painful the subject Major Elphinstone has thought it necessary to keep Prince Arthur aware of what is going on, and with the assistance of a map, teach him to follow closely and comprehend all the military movements. He appears to take a deep interest in the matter and it may be of use hereafter as the first step in his military education. . . . "

Plans were now made for a visit to Coburg, a visit that should be really cheerful, and as " Your Majesty has been kind enough not to fetter Major Elphinstone's movements," he then submitted that Prince Bernhard of Saxe-Meiningen should be asked to stay at the Rosenau. " This would render the stay there of double interest to Prince Arthur, who has never yet had any companions staying with him for more than a day." Lady Augusta Stanley had suggested that instead of the young Prince Bernhard, one of the Battenberg princes should be asked to the Rosenau, and Elphinstone writes to her his reasons for sticking to his own choice. He says :

" The young Battenberg is a very nice little boy. I recollect him well. He played with Prince Arthur when at Darmstadt and I watched him closely, as in fact I do every boy who ever is brought into contact with the Prince, purposely with the view of seeing how far they might influence his character. . . . "

But he considered that Prince Bernhard, being older and nearer of an age, he would be a far better companion for Prince Arthur. " And it is for this reason that I should prefer his staying at the Rosenau, so as to omit nothing which may render the stay there agreeable and its recollections most pleasing. . . . "

It was the end of June before they started on their way to Coburg. On the 23rd, Elphinstone wrote at Windsor to the Queen (also at Windsor) to assure her that "Your Majesty's wishes have already been anticipated. The 'green' tartan as well as the full dress kilt will accompany the Prince as well as the evening and riding dress, so as to be ready for any emergency." And from then onwards telegrams and letters kept her informed of their doings. They visited not only the Prince's great-uncle Leopold at Brussels, but also Queen Augusta of Prussia, who was staying at her Palace at Coblenz, which was then Rhenish Prussia. From a polite letter to Her Majesty and from blunt phrases in his diary, we realise that the Queen of Prussia was charming during this visit both to the boy and his governor. With the latter she discussed the war against Schleswig. She had never approved of it and "stigmatised it as most unfortunate in every way." She made much of small Prince Arthur, so that her entourage, who at first had been "very rude, changed tune afterwards." Having later in the evening encountered some Austrians, Elphinstone ends his day's diary with a comment on how great was the difference between the Austrian and Prussian character—"the former so much higher bred."

Her Majesty answered his letter :

WINDSOR CASTLE, *June 30, 1864.*

"The Queen thanks Major Elphinstone much for his 2 very satisfactory letters from Brussels, Bruges, (where *we* in *happy former times* slept on 2 occasions), and Coblenz.

The Queen is sorry for the bad weather.

The Queen rejoices so much that our darling Boy is liked, as he must be, and that he should be now at our beloved Coburg. The *dear* Rosenau, *how* the precious Prince loved it ! In my letters from there he speaks of it with such love, and before our marriage with *such* sorrow to leave it.

Kindest love to Arthur."

The weather during the journey was "decidedly adverse." On arrival Elphinstone noted in his diary : "the Duchess of Coburg calls ; what a sweet person, shows us all about the place." But he added, "The Rosenau looks most damp."

Everything that was humanly possible to arrange for the Prince's enjoyment at the Rosenau had been seen to. But one thing was beyond Elphinstone's power. The Queen's proverbial good luck in the matter of weather had not been inherited by her

son, and at this moment the heavens chose to do their worst. Unprecedented torrents descended upon the Duchies. When it did not drizzle it rained, and when it rained it poured. The few fine intervals were broken by storms, with hailstones more than two inches long doing infinite damage. Elphinstone's sketch-books that he had hoped to fill during sunny afternoons were put away unopened. The local folk protested that never could they recollect such a cold and wretched summer—still the rain continued. Indoor games took the place of picnics, and museums of expeditions into the forest.

Mr. Jolley took to his bed ; perhaps more important for the comfort of the household, the cook and Collins were also laid low. Elphinstone became seriously alarmed, for scarlet fever was rife in the village below the house. On July 7th he wrote to the Queen : " Since Monday there have been continual heavy showers and the temperature has never exceeded 55° even in the middle of the day. This has necessitated a fire in the sitting room. . . . At night the temperature on one occasion fell to 36° Fahrenheit." The idea of wanting fires in July must have seemed to Her Majesty incredible and this letter called forth a protest, in Princess Alice's handwriting :

WINDSOR, *July 11, '64.*

" The Queen wishes Princess Louis of Hesse to thank Major Elphinstone very much for his letter and to say as Major Elphinstone mentions their having fires at the Rosenau that much care be taken with that and with all lights, as such an old house would take fire and burn down very easily."

Then unluckily Elphinstone wrote to Sir Charles Phipps and gave him a description of the weather they were enduring. " I doubt whether we shall leave this place as well pleased with our stay as I had anticipated," he wrote. " In the whole course of my experience I never recollect such a continuance of bad weather. Tomorrow it will be three weeks since we left England and in that time we have had only two days without rain. I don't mean showery days, but a continuous steady drizzling rain which had not tended to improve the health of this locality. In my letters to the Queen who likes this place extremely, as you know, I made the best of it. Had the rain continued another day, I don't think that it would have been wise to have remained any longer, and however much it might have distressed the Queen, I should have been forced to tell her the reason of our curtailing the visit."

This letter was tactlessly submitted to the Queen and resulted in one of the few times she shows annoyance with Elphinstone in their long correspondence. Criticism of the place was not liked; the Prince Consort had been happy there.

OSBORNE, *July 16, 1864.*

"The Queen thanks Major Elphinstone for his interesting and satisfactory letters up to the 12th. She is, however, sorry to see by his letter to Sir C. Phipps (which in his absence General Grey showed her) that the *unusually* cold and bad weather has rather spoilt the stay (for the grown up ones) but as regards the climate which perhaps grown up people may rejoice to be acclimatised to, the *Queen* must repeat that the *Prince and his brother regularly lived* at the dear Rosenau, from the *beginning of May till October*; she knows that Dr. Jenner (even *last year* when we had a good deal of rain and cold in August and September) considered the situation, air and soil as peculiarly wholesome.

Therefore, Major Elphinstone must not be *unfavourably* impressed for the future. The Queen would wish if the weather were to continue fine, as Prince Arthur seems so happy, that perhaps a few days (say three or four) should be added to the stay and make up for the bad weather and leave a good impression.

She thinks *localities* and air are *now* too much thought *about*, and that one may overdo the notion of its effect upon people's health.

Good air is good air, whether there be occasional disturbance and deterioration of it from unusual rain and cold or draught and the Queen *is* a disbeliever in the effects of climate on healthy people. It is now more one's health and *living* and feelings which affect one, or great change of temperature, than mild or cold climates.

Does Prince Bernhard accompany you any further?"

Poor man! The Queen's letter arrived just after he had posted ten pages to her and it needed another twelve, closely written and full of diplomacy, to ease the situation. He hastened to assure Her Majesty that Prince Arthur had enjoyed his visit immensely; Prince Bernhard had enjoyed himself greatly and Mr. Rossman, Prince Bernhard's gentleman, had enjoyed himself thoroughly; he himself, alive to the beauties of nature as he was, could not *possibly* but admire the surrounding scenery where art and nature had combined to create most beautiful pictures at every turn of the road; the walks were charming, the picturesque effects delightful, the place so extremely pretty that no one could fail to be favourably

impressed ; but—the weather really had been very bad. The whole of the Thuringian forest had seemed the point of attraction of clouds from every quarter. It was so bad that had they been in any other less delightful spot it would have been unendurable.

Perhaps it was just as well that Elphinstone was master of the Rosenau household and could without trouble put off dinner for half an hour to enable him to compose this tactful letter that had hurriedly to be sent to Osborne.

Towards the end of the visit the weather relented and excursions and picnics in the forest became possible. More boys from the neighbourhood were asked to join in these expeditions, and one or two of Elphinstone's letters giving descriptions of the enjoyment of the boys bear no trace of any diplomatic glossing over of unpleasant facts.

The morning they left the Rosenau he wrote :

“Major Elphinstone has seldom seen Prince Arthur so thoroughly happy and he is now very sad at heart on account of leaving the Rosenau. It has left on him a deep and most agreeable impression and he will ever look back to these three weeks spent in such agreeable companionship with boys of his own age, the enjoyment of which he has hitherto but seldom tasted, with great pleasure. . . .”

So ended this visit to Coburg, on a note of real enjoyment. Yet we hear little more of the Duchies after this or of the idea of Prince Arthur living there. Eventually in 1893 Prince Alfred succeeded his uncle. On the death of his son in 1899 the Duchies were indeed offered to Prince Arthur, by this time Duke of Connaught. His refusal evoked a pleasant cartoon in *Punch*, above the words :

“But in spite of all temptations to belong to other nations,
He remains an *Englishman*.”

CHAPTER XIV : THE CURE FOR
"JOHN BULLISM"

IN Elphinstone's mind the cure for "John Bullism"—that arrogant insularity enjoyed by some Britons—lay in seeing something of the Continent; but in the holiday that followed the visit to Coburg he had more than this in view, and several other lessons were taught at the same time. When the chilly weeks at the Rosenau were over and they had waved farewell to Prince Bernhard, Elphinstone, with Prince Arthur and Mr. Jolley, set their faces southwards for a walking tour. The trip started at that central point of Switzerland, the Schweizerhof, Lucerne, even then considered as "that extremely good hotel." They were following in the footsteps of the Prince Consort, who had made a tour with his tutor, M. Florschütz, twenty-seven years earlier, and from the latter's diary Elphinstone had noted down the names not only of the places but the hotels where the two men had then stayed. He writes: "This list will no doubt be interesting to Your Majesty especially as it gives the exact dates. But in addition, it will prove a guide as to Prince Arthur's course which has been shaped accordingly. . . ."

Her Majesty had had the same idea and copied her list:

" . . . out of a little book with views which the dear Prince collected and sent to the Queen of the journey.

The Queen does not know *at all* whether any of these places will be likely to be visited but sends them all the same.

She *must earnestly* forbid any *dangerous* expedition being undertaken, *nothing whatever* which could be called *running any risk*, and Prince Arthur can *see quite* enough that is beautiful *WITHOUT doing this*."

They travelled in leisurely fashion by boat and carriage; there was plenty of time to potter round a market-place, to walk down to the river and look at water-falls and to fill the carriage with wild flowers. There was even time for an occasional swift note in a sketch-book; they lunched at wayside inns, "delighted to be able to partake of it out of doors in the true Italian style." Cultivation of the enjoyment of fine scenery Elphinstone considered an important part of education, "as it tends so much to refine the mind"; and during their climb over the Furka

pass to the Grimsel a love of flowers was easily encouraged. There were geraniums, wild rhododendron, iris, forget-me-not, pinks and maidenhair fern to be picked without any dangerous climbing, and besides pressing a few of these and including them in the letters to the Queen, they made up some bouquets to be sent to Her Majesty by post. It was an optimistic effort that was unsuccessful and the Swiss postal authorities learnt all about their negligence in due time.

Almost at the start of their serious climbing Elphinstone found himself faced with a difficulty. Mr. Jolley had been unwell at the Rosenau and was obviously unfit for hard walking. He insisted on coming, however, and the effort reduced him to complete silence. Elphinstone did his utmost to persuade him to go home, but speechless and determined he stuck to his post for a few days before giving in. The relief for all three when this at length occurred was considerable, though the removal of this wet blanket brought an anxiety—should any accident happen to Elphinstone what would the boy do all alone?—and he wrote to Osborne for help.

The Queen's choice of a companion for mountaineering was curious. Colonel Seymour, one of her gentlemen, aged 52 and far from strong, was called upon to join Prince Arthur in Switzerland. She wrote:

"The Queen is very sorry for Mr. Jolley but owns she expected it.

Col. Seymour, tho' he may have a little peculiarity of manner is thoroughly refined in feeling and tone, has travelled a good deal, adores the beloved Prince with whom he travelled in Italy and therefore can talk to Arthur about his dear father, is thoroughly high principled and *entirely* devoted to the Prince and herself, and having nothing to do, she thought he was a very fit person to go out to join Prince Arthur, knowing besides how much it would please the faithful friend, of *former* happy days.

He knows that Major Elphinstone will tell him whatever he has to do. He speaks French admirably and has lived a great deal abroad.

The Queen *begs* Major Elphinstone will spare himself as much as he can."

Elphinstone loved the hills, which he knew of old. On this trip, in spite of hurry and interruption, there were moments for painting and it was now that he began to feel master of his tools.

Some of his sketches done at this time are exquisite. He had an instinctive feeling for the bones of a hill-side; his mountains are never mere coloured bits of cardboard but are masses of solid strata with weight and balance, catching the light at unexpected angles, a never-ending enchantment of both colour and shape. As his mountains are things of solid rock, so his skies are luminous and his water liquid—things quite beyond the power of ordinary amateurs.

Elphinstone's diaries, scrappy though they are, yet throw light upon his letters to Her Majesty. Except where plans had to be altered, there was no need to worry her with things awkward or tiresome. In his letters—like a sundial—he only marked the fine hours. She was told of the beauties of the scenery, the excellence of guides and the good though plain food at the Alpine huts. It was not necessary for her to realise that all the writing and telegrams to her delayed their departure on some expedition or other; she need not know that an hotel where they had to stay "looked fair and stately, but smelt horrid," whereas another was "poor and humble but clean." When he wrote from a mountain hut at Kienthal ten pages of description of their day's walk and of Prince Arthur's refreshing sleep among the royal plaids on the rough bed, did she realise that he himself got no sleep at all "between writing this long letter to the Queen and the loud snoring of the guides in the loft overhead"? He merely "hoped that she would excuse the frequent incoherence in his latter letters. They are always written late at night after fatiguing days and he humbly trusts that this may afford some excuse and that Your Majesty will graciously excuse the many erasures that have in consequence been made." The letter from which the above is the closing sentence consists of eleven closely written pages with two erasures and one large blot and was finished at 3 a.m. Her Majesty was sincerely interested in all these accounts.

OSBORNE, Aug. 12, 1864.

"The Queen thanks Major Elphinstone *very* much for his interesting letters of the 3rd and 4th from Kienthal and of the 7th from Martigny.

His accounts are delightful, but alas! *the One* whom she would like to show them to and talk *all* over with and who would have understood all, and *so* much rejoiced at the interest shown by His dear Child in the Scenery—butterflies and flowers—(so like

himself) and in the *successful* independence of travelling—is not *here* and *all* falls *flat*, though it is anxiously looked for and read !

The fresh flowers have never arrived !

Mr. Jolley arrived *last* Saturday or Monday and is better. . . .

The Queen is not well and feels how sorrow and anxiety, hard work and unshared responsibility affects her health. . . .

. . . The Queen earnestly hopes Major Elphinstone will give himself rest, whenever he can."

Elphinstone wrote of the Prince :

" The sun's rays have not left his face and hands unscathed, but the brown tinge is so evenly coloured that it is a positive improvement to his face and completely hides those slight freckles to which Your Majesty objected. Everybody admires the sturdy way in which he ascends the hills."

The Prince had enjoyed it, but apart from this and from the physical benefit he had had to do without comfort for the first time in his life ; he had had to pack his own luggage, take nothing but necessities and be independent of servants. The food had been of the plainest, and the walks, though never dangerous, had been at times very fatiguing. The boy had risen to the occasion manfully and Elphinstone was contented with the experiment.

At Chamonix they were joined by Colonel Seymour. Apart from his age and the fact that he was a very poor walker, he had never been strong since receiving a wound in the head during the Crimean War and after their first long expedition he was exhausted ; the day ended in his riding home, " Prince Arthur quite triumphant at being able to outdo one of the grown-ups." It was clear that in future their excursions must not be so energetic.

One more long expedition, however, they did achieve and Colonel Seymour valiantly struggled through the day determined not to be left out of the climb from Chamonix up to the Grande Mulets, 9,800 feet high.

Elphinstone writes that on the 13th August :

" The entire party started from Chamonix at 4.50 a.m., consisting of ten people altogether including the guides and servants who wished to attend (also a photographer who had asked permission to accompany them). After leaving Chamonix there is a steep ascent through a fir forest for about 2 hours. Colonel

Seymour about whom there was the greatest fear as he is not a good walker and very short-sighted, rode up this steep ascent. . . .

The moment the ice was reached a new disposition was adopted in order strictly to follow Your Majesty's wishes. Prince Arthur was placed in charge of the chief guide, a powerful strong but most cautious man, who could if need be have carried him easily up the whole way. This guide was directed never to leave go of Prince Arthur's hand. Another guide took charge of the courier Muller and Collins (the valet), while Major Elphinstone took charge of Colonel Seymour's servant who was unaccustomed to mountain climbing. Colonel Seymour himself, however, could not get on without two guides, one on each side, to pull him up the steep places and retard his progress in the descent, for his shortsightedness prevented his distinguishing a hollow from an elevation and would have caused him many a tumble but for this double support. The photographer and his camera led the way. The party proceeded nearly in the order named, slowly but steadily over the icefields and reached the "cabanne" at the Grande Mulets at 12.5. . . . This ascent had been watched from Chamonix and was announced by five discharges of cannon heard distinctly at the height and distance. . . . The return was also announced by five discharges of cannon."

In a faded photograph we can examine a gracefully posed group of bewhiskered mountaineers with all the accoutrements of climbing, alpenstock, ropes, axes and veils, etc., Prince Arthur looking very small in the centre. The photographer, anyway, had enjoyed himself that day.

From Montreux more bouquets of wild flowers were collected. This time—probably the Swiss Postal Authorities were now on the *qui vive* for any parcel addressed to the Queen of England—not only did the flowers reach England but they arrived the very morning of the anniversary of the Prince Consort's birthday—a successful bit of staff work on everyone's part that was rewarded by "so gracious a telegram from the Queen about the flowers."

Later, after paying some visits to various royal relations of the Prince, during one of which they suffered severe pangs of hunger through having mistakenly expected the invitation to include dinner, they settled down to struggle with the German tongue at Bingen. Here we get news of Elphinstone's parents who were staying at Wiesbaden, almost the last time we hear of them

from his diaries. Here also their enjoyment was increased by the arrival of a Thames-built racing boat named after Prince Arthur's youngest sister Beatrice, which "looked particularly pretty and neat," and the holiday finished with a spectacular farewell to Bingen; Elphinstone wrote from Coblenz on September 27:

"The crew of the boat *Beatrice* were dressed alike in white flannels trimmed with garter blue; a blue leather belt round the waist and a straw hat with a blue band. The entire equipage looked very well upon the water and many people gathered on the wharf even at that early hour to see the Prince start. . . ."

From Brussels on the way home Elphinstone tells Her Majesty that the Prince was looking the picture of health. "The journey has affected him, as it does everybody, by giving to his mind a good strong healthy tone." Concluding, Elphinstone told Her Majesty how helpful Colonel Seymour had been: "Major Elphinstone in return has done his utmost to render Col. Seymour's stay agreeable to himself and he thinks that the latter has enjoyed the journey thoroughly, although the difference between his age and Prince Arthur's rendered the task sometimes rather difficult."

CHAPTER XV : H.M.S. "ENCHANTRESS"

SWITZERLAND had been a success; the next tour was more ambitious. A few years previously the Prince of Wales had been to Palestine with Dean Stanley as his guide. The Dean was now consulted and a trip for Prince Arthur was planned to include Tunis, Palestine and Greece, with Mr. Jolley's company for historical references, but with the naval officers of H.M.S. *Enchantress* to relieve the strain.

Two days before starting for the Mediterranean, Elphinstone notes:

"Monday—27th February 65—Had asked Charlie Gordon to dine at Club, and was just leaving Windsor when message came from Queen to dine with her. I only gentleman, rather afraid

but everything went charmingly. She so nice and cheerful and pleasant. No hitch of any kind. I really enjoyed the dinner. Afterwards she spoke to me in a most affable and pleasant manner. Nice way in which she remained to speak although pressed for time, and on leaving room said, 'I hope that you will take care of yourself and not over work yourself. Goodbye Major Elphinstone.' "

Elphinstone took Prince Arthur to dine with the Prince of Wales the night before they left; he was struck by the want of ceremony shown, the Princess of Wales coming into the room calmly knitting; the whole evening passed in a very friendly manner and he writes to assure Her Majesty—always rather nervous about visits to Marlborough House—that they did not stay late and that the boy was in bed by 10.15 p.m.

They left on March 1st and he noted in his diary:

"*Thursday—2nd March 65*—Reach Paris at 1.30. Lord Cowley at station to receive Prince. Drove to Embassy, then round town. Wretched drizzling day. At 4 we drove to Tuileries. Prince Imperial received Prince Arthur at door, conducted him to Emperor and Empress. Both most affable and *gratified*. Little Prince like neither, pale delicate face, intelligent and sweet, very shy, evidently too much by himself. At 6 p.m. he returned visit at Embassy. Very nice. Officer in attendance told him, where Japan was, little one quite annoyed at his supposed ignorance. Prince Arthur gave him his photograph on taking leave, immense success. I am glad I got it done. What a pleasant dinner at Embassy. Lady Cowley *most* charming and agreeable. Left at 7.45 p.m. Lord Cowley accompanies us to station."

From the very first moment the Mediterranean showed them its worst side and a subtle reference to sea-sickness is sent to the Queen from Naples which was their first port of call:

"... Prince Arthur's first view of the Mediterranean was not a favourable one, as the sky was partially clouded and this imparted a 'leaden' colour to the sea, moreover the multiplicity of small foamy waves detracted, if not from its beauty, at all events from Prince Arthur's ability to appreciate its beauty. . . ."

In his diary he notes:

"Perfect hurricane, ship rolling frightfully, and most tremendous seas, all my things knocked about cabin."

Most of the company retired to their cabins in the awful weather and even Elphinstone, who was a good sailor, took to the deck-house and solaced himself with French novels ; but for Taormina they had a fine day, among the "olive groves and valleys richly scented by the flowers of the olive and the orange. The ripe fruit hanging in clusters greatly attracted the Prince's fancy." Elphinstone had a happy half-hour with colour and brushes ; a sketch-book with caricatures, drawn by all three of them at the same time, bears witness to an afternoon of laughter and contentment.

The object of the tour was the study of ancient history. They went on shore at all their places of call armed with maps, historical treatise and books of poetry, while stories of famous sieges or battles were read upon the ancient sites. But at Tunis

" . . . The Bey stated that he was aware that the Prince came here to study and that once on shore nobody should interrupt him, but that he could not permit one of Your Majesty's sons to land without due honour being paid to them. . . ."

The *Enchantress* lay at La Golette some six miles from Tunis and it is interesting to read of conditions for wheeled traffic at that time. Between Tunis and La Golette "there is no formed road and the stiff clay occasionally embedded the carriage wheels so deeply that additional horses had to be sent for." They drove from the harbour through deep mud and among cornfields and old dilapidated-looking olive groves taking $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours to cover the six miles. At Tunis, a wretched-looking place he thought, they changed into the Bey's carriage and drove to the town Palace where : "Prince Arthur proceeded to a room prepared for him to put on his Scotch (Trews) dress. It was very much admired."

In full costume they drove out three miles to the Bardo palace. At one period the approach to the Bey had to be made under a low wooden bar, thus ensuring a deep obeisance. In Prince Arthur's reception there is, however, no mention of any such bar. Amid the noise of guns saluting and bands playing : "the Bey on top of steps shakes hands ; good hearted face, honest, thoughtful, at least more than generality here, sad looking ; led Prince Arthur by hand to grand reception room. Lots of compliments, then took jewelled order and hung it round his neck. Prince Arthur went into Harem and was introduced to the Bey's wife. Then all of us allowed to go into it ; women being sent away.

We left for town Palace where Bey returned visit. He kissed Prince Arthur on both cheeks, and bidding goodbye some tears stole down his cheeks."

From Tunis Elphinstone wrote to Her Majesty :

" . . . The Bey's great ambition appears to be to receive an English order. . . . The present Bey has shown himself most favourably disposed towards the English residents who are admirably represented by their Consul-General, Mr. Wood, whose tact, knowledge of the people and most agreeable manners have enabled him to maintain a position of great influence with the Bey. . . ."

Elphinstone's letter was forwarded to Lord Palmerston and resulted in the Bey being given the Grand Cross of the Bath, and a few months later Mr. Wood, the Consul-General at Tunis, wrote to Elphinstone thanking him for his help in recommending the honour :

" . . . it has relieved me from an irksome embarrassment and has placed me in the most favourable position with His Highness, so much so that I trust to be able to turn to account the occasion of his Investiture for objects of Humanity. Although covered with foreign decorations, the Beys have never ceased, for the last twenty-seven years, to have but one great object of ambition, namely the honour of an English order. . . . At the announcement that he was to receive the order, his satisfaction and pleasure were so intense that he literally trembled with emotion. . . . He added . . . that when his breast is proudly covered with the Ribbon and protected by the Star placed there by Her Majesty, it will give him additional courage to face in future the not over friendly acts of his reputed Friends."

Three months later Her Majesty writes to the Prime Minister about :

" . . . A subject which she has much at heart and in which she has no doubt that Lord Palmerston will readily concur . . . she would wish to give the civil *Companionship of the Bath* to Major Elphinstone, Governor to Prince Arthur of whose services to our dear boy she can likewise never speak in too high terms. . . ."

Malta was their next port of call. Here Elphinstone met some old friends among the garrison, who gave him their unvarnished

opinion of the poor condition of the defences. He expresses to Her Majesty the eternal cry of British soldiers in times of peace : lack of men, arms and equipment to enable them in an emergency to do their work without great and quite unnecessary loss of life. Altogether the place was in a bad state in case of war.

On leaving Malta they sailed for the Holy Land and arrived at Jaffa in great heat on the 22nd of March. At this point the tour became a pilgrimage ; history books were put away and Bibles took their place. Strenuous exertion was the order of the day ; they were up at about five o'clock each morning and spent many hours riding uncomfortable steeds across rough country so long as the daylight lasted ; hours punctuated with sightseeing and picnics. The notes to be used later for composing detailed letters to the Queen were scribbled in pencil into a minute note-book, probably often written while on horseback and obviously always in great haste, and it is to be hoped they proved more decipherable to Elphinstone himself than they did to a later generation. He notes : “. . . Wrote to the Queen till 11.30. Write late, how the dogs bark in Jerusalem—horrid. Tried to sleep but quite unable ; write this at 2.30.” The dogs were a nuisance in more ways than their bark and he was shortly to experience their bite as well. Altogether during these ten days he seems to have got very little sleep and he complains in the diary of feeling ill ; yet even in his disjointed sentences the sincere reverence of a deeply religious man rings clear.

At Jerusalem they had three busy days of sightseeing. After this there was more leisure not only for writing but for sketching. He caught on paper the hazy mist above the Jordan Valley and the soft pink cliffs of Moab. He sketched groups of Arab horsemen in their striped clothes, spears in hand, riding across those evil-looking tumbled hillocks by the Dead Sea or perched upon camels with gaudy saddle-cloths. He sketched their own green tents scattered among the trees near Jericho with the Mount of Temptation, boldly stratified and hot in the shimmering tones of reflected light, in the background. He bathed in the Jordan, the “ water so smooth and pleasant, current most rapid and almost impossible to swim against it.” They made their way north, climbing the harsh hills of Judea, which are stratified with long lines of dark rock between golden sand, resembling a tiger in colouring—a quality that seems inherent not only in the landscape but in the climate and the people. They lost themselves at times in spite of guides, and Elphinstone with a sol-

dier's knowledge of map reading, had to put them on their right path more than once. Up on the heights they had the sense, almost more than the vision, of that chasm of the earth's surface gaping open in an unnatural way at their feet.

They were entertained by Pashas who gave them excellent meals with national dishes and arranged for their amusement bonfires and illuminations, music and sword dances. Sometimes they camped on rough hillsides with : " loose stones and rubbish, wonderful gorge of ravine and rocks overhanging, more desolate and wild than anything I have ever yet seen " ; sometimes their tents lay among fields of rose-bushes and asphodels. They went by a paved Roman road to Jacob's well, then half hidden among blocks of stone under a rough vault. They left the vivid colouring of Judea behind them and the pale pillars of the royal city of Samaria stood like avenues of ghosts among the wind-blown olives, Elphinstone collected and pressed some flowers ; not only were there scarlet anemones—apparently immune from the Arab's friend the goat—but crimson poppies and vetches that put to shade the anemones around them ; at the Caves of Endor he picked wallflowers, mallow and maidenhair ; from Magdala and Capernaum came tiny irises raising their heads only an inch or two above the ground, also tall lupins glowing like sapphires. When they reached the shores of the lake of Galilee, among the asphodels, tulips and oleanders by the water's edge, they paused and said a few prayers. The gentle outline and colouring of Galilee came as a surprise after the fierce atmosphere of Judea.

They embarked again on the *Enchantress* at Acre. It had been an exhausting fortnight of both physical and mental strain and Elphinstone was thankful for a few quiet days on board ship to sort out the hurried impressions, to compose a journal to the Queen and to settle up the accounts of the expedition. These latter are interesting. Quite apart from all that was given away in charity at the Holy places, presents were scattered all along their route, jewelled tie-pins to consuls and gold-mounted pistols to Turkish officials. Gifts that seem to have been particularly popular among Pashas were musical boxes, not small pocket things but extravagant affairs costing many pounds ; it would be interesting to know whether any of these much-coveted treasures still tinkle out the trills of Donizetti and Rossini across the hills of Palestine.

The Queen, thanking Elphinstone for the Journal, writes :

OSBORNE, May 11, 1865.

"The Queen found Major Elphinstone's journal so interesting that she had two copies made of them and not only sent them to her *children* abroad but allowed several of the Household, and even some few of our intelligent servants (who take fully *as much* interest if not more as *higher* people in such things) to read them. They are really so *beautifully* written. . . . Lord Russell was one of the last who has seen them."

From the Holy Land H.M.S. *Enchantress* took them westward along the coast of Asia Minor to the Aegean archipelago. The ship was well named; for merely to read the list of the places they visited holds enchantment: Rhodes, Santorin, Patmos, Mount Athos and Parnassus, Thermopylae and Ithaca. They went to the Dardanelles, familiar ground to Elphinstone from Crimean days; with difficulty they rowed up the river Meander and saw the ruins of Miletus; they were escorted by archaeologists over Ephesus, Pergamos and Troy. Consuls were ready at every port to make things easy with conveyances or horses for distant expeditions and to give advice as to the possibilities of shooting, etc. Also there was plenty of room on board to carry home treasure-trove and purchases.

At this point the glories of ancient Greece and Rome took hold of Elphinstone, with the result that his diaries which had formerly been scattered with comments on events and people, now become merely an archaeological chronicle. Gradually the pencil slips into the pages illustrating some archway or carving that interested him and the diaries as such die a natural death, to be resurrected by sketch-books pure and simple.

As the *Enchantress* made her way along the coast of Asia Minor they landed at Kalamaki Bay, and there Elphinstone made a couple of careful drawings of the syphon aqueduct of Roman times with its sweep across a wide valley high among the hills above the Mediterranean. The following spring he writes to the Queen about a lecture at the Royal Institution where: "the lecturer very cleverly alluded to that most curious aqueduct discovered during the last trip in the *Enchantress* at Kalamaki, and a most favourable impression was produced that by Prince Arthur's instrumentality so curious a fact should have been brought to light, materially affecting one's pre-existing notions of the knowledge of Art amongst the Ancients."

It was hard to face the prospect of a return home to the cold

rooms of Victorian castles and the routine of military academies, and a petition went forth in an effort to prolong the holiday. But their eloquence was of no avail. The Queen wrote :

OSBORNE, *April 26, 1865.*

“ . . . She is very sorry *not to be able* to grant Major Elphinstone's request to prolong Prince Arthur's absence, but the Queen cannot forego the satisfaction of having this beloved child with her on her poor sad birthday—especially as Princess Alice cannot be there, nor Prince Alfred. Prince Arthur can go again into these parts.”

So they hurried back from Venice, their way illuminated by lightning and deafened by the thunder of a weather dæmon determined to be spectacular to the bitter end—and were back at Balmoral on the evening of the 23rd of May.

Wind or rain, storm or deluge, the Mediterranean had cast its spell not only on Elphinstone who knew its beauties before, but upon the boy ; so that fourteen years later in spite of some parental opposition Prince Arthur determined that his honeymoon should be spent in Grecian waters. This time there were women also on board, and it was not H.M.S. *Enchantress* but the Royal Yacht *Osborne* that took the Prince and his bride from Gibraltar to Asia Minor ; among others in waiting went Sir Howard and a youthful Lady Elphinstone, and it is from her letters home to her mother and not from his diaries that we get an occasional sidelight on this later royal progress.

CHAPTER XVI : COURT APPOINTMENTS

ONE thing could always rouse the Queen to anger : rudeness to inferiors in rank. Writing to Elphinstone, she insists upon politeness in those about her to those below them ; bad manners in her household she would not tolerate, and some of her letters on the attitude she wished her children to adopt run to several thousand words. Many years later Elphinstone's wife, on being asked to fill up a page of personal questions, in the line asking, “ What do you most dislike ? ” wrote : “ Bad manners.” She also adopted Her Majesty's attitude.

In the earlier half of 1866 the Queen had trouble in domestic matters. The death of Sir Charles Phipps in March was a severe blow and the Household did not immediately return to its normal smooth running ; two untrained valets and an unfortunate minor appointment created difficulty. Her Majesty took advantage of Elphinstone's powers of peace-making, and poured out the details to him, in some four thousand words of indignant worry ; putting him in the awkward position of passing on her commands to those superior to him in rank. That he remained on friendly terms with all concerned is surprising. These storms in tea-cups are now of no interest in themselves, yet several things stand out ; the minute detail into which Her Majesty goes in these domestic questions ; the fact that it was Elphinstone to whom she turned in her worries ; and lastly her own showing of the standard of good manners that she required from those about her. The detail into which she goes is astounding. Not only does she discuss the quality of a valet's boots, but she knew the characters of brothers and nephews of her present servants, who might in the future become footmen or valets in their turn. She preferred to have Highlanders around her. One footman of whom she writes—though “very sharp, good and attentive” was “*vulgar*, and the Queen thinks that a nice intelligent, steady, simple unspoilt Highlander with the gentlemanly bearing, independent feelings they *all* have will be particularly nice . . .”

In another letter she says, referring to trouble between a valet and a cavalry officer recently appointed to the Household :

“ . . . it will never do to speak harshly and dictatorially to Highlanders ; their independence and self-respect and proper spirit which makes them resent *that* far more than an ordinary . . . English servant. It is *this* which the Queen is particularly anxious to guard against . . . for a young officer accustomed to order about soldiers may not understand the *peculiar* nature of these people. . . .”

Elphinstone evidently tried to put in a word for the officer and received from the Queen one of the few letters written to him in a spirit of annoyance.

CLIVEDEN, MAIDENHEAD.

May 28, 1866.

“The Queen thanks Major Elphinstone for his letter and is glad to hear dear Prince Arthur is going on well. She trusts this warm

weather will soon take it away.¹ She will not further prolong this unpleasant topic, but this much, in the spirit of justice she *must* say—which is : that she sees Major Elphinstone has only heard *one* side of the story. It is not fair to take the part of the stronger against the *weaker* . . . if he had been kindly spoken to—instead of being from the 1st moment treated by a complete stranger as *no* royal or any servant *ought* to be—and what no high-spirited Highlander *could* stand—this would *never* have occurred. . . .”

Continuing her letter, she hoped that the young cavalryman would be civil and considerate :

“ towards the servants—for the Queen would *not* tolerate the contrary. It is *not* a good quality to be unkind and sharp towards your *inferiors* and does not shew superiority, and the Queen can not say that she ever thinks it speaks for those who *do* treat them so.

This is over—and the Queen will not again recur to it, but watch how matters go.”

Two months later matters reached a climax and the Queen writes that she has had “ a terrible deal of annoyance and vexation which has worried her sadly and besides taken up much time.”

To Elphinstone’s suggestion that the officer should be given a minor appointment with Prince Arthur instead of continuing with Prince Leopold the Queen writes an emphatic negative :

“ . . . he has not enlarged views or knowledge enough to lead and develop so clever a boy as Leopold, *without* a *father*, nor has he softness and kindliness of manner and character to bring out and foster those feelings which the Queen is so anxious (as Major Elphinstone knows) to see cultivated in our sons.

. . . And having suffered so *severely* in the Prince of Wales’ case from motives of so-called ‘ *manliness* ’ (falsely called) being *forced* into him and destroying to a *great extent* those qualities which the Queen knows Major Elphinstone *carefully fostered* in our dear Arthur—feels it a duty to *herself* and to Arthur (who has no father to watch and counteract any of those effects which unfortunately *are* English ones as Major Elphinstone *himself* knows) not to make a *trial* even, when there is *something* in a person which does not inspire the Queen with *that* confidence or rather more with that feeling of *sympathy* which would make her *wish* him to be much with her son.

¹ The Prince had whooping-cough.

Major Elphinstone knows that she *hopes* dear Arthur will *remain* a comfort to her and that the footing with him may be *quite different* to the one on which she is with her 2 elder sons, and therefore dreads more than words can say anything which could have the *effect* of making Arthur too much of a regular *young* officer, especially *one* belonging to a corps connected with *much* riding etc. . . .”

The Queen’s worries were by no means only about the household matters. At this period Prussia was continuing her aggressive career, this time against Austria, involving heartbreaking moments for Her Majesty’s two eldest daughters, whose husbands were fighting on opposite sides. The Queen sent to Greenwich letters from the Crown Princess giving news of the German campaign which she thought would be read there with interest.

“ . . . She thanks for several letters and especially for the one with the very *gratifying* and delightful account of dear Arthur, which gladdened and cheered her heart, so much overshadowed with sorrow and anxiety about her absent daughters, especially poor Princess Alice, and many relations etc.

Major Elphinstone will grieve over the loss of that distinguished and excellent man Sir H. Jones ! ” . . .

Later in the year Princess Alice wrote to Elphinstone asking him to get Christmas presents for her for the two young princes. Continuing, she says :

“ This year which brought so much of pain sorrow and anxiety closes tranquilly and with the sincerest prayer that other wars may be averted for those who have seen them nearby know *what* war is ! There are many wounded in their beds still—to some of them the Pss. took her eldest little girl ¹ to Hos. this morning, who seemed to please and amuse the poor sufferers.

The Pce. sends his friendliest remembrances to the Major and begs his love as the Pss. to her dear Brothers.”

A change in the Prince’s household was now imminent. With the entrance examination to Woolwich over, Mr. Jolley’s tutoring would no longer be necessary. A young officer would instead be needed as equerry and the search for the ideal person was in Elphinstone’s hands. He writes many letters upon the subject, for he felt that much depended on finding the right person, one

¹ Princess Victoria, later Princess Louis of Battenberg and Marchioness of Milford Haven.

also of whom the Queen would approve. There was difficulty in selection for "those whom one has to consult cannot be trusted to recognise the peculiar qualities concerning which Your Majesty is most anxious." If some young man were found in whom complete confidence could be placed, Prince Arthur would feel far more inclined to follow his example in manners, etc., than all the advice that Elphinstone himself might give.

BALMORAL, *Sept.* 19, 1866.

"The Queen had intended *and* wished long ago (but could not manage it) to write to Major Elphinstone to thank him for *all* his letters and for all his care and pains with respect to the young officer to be appointed. She *owns* that she feels anxious too, considering our *late* failure, tho' the case is very different. It will be better to *wait* at any rate *till* the Queen *can speak* to Major Elphinstone on the subject. . . . Prince Alfred leaves to-morrow so the 2 Princes will not even meet.

The Queen *cannot* regret this for Prince Alfred makes her sad and anxious. The Prince of Wales is *very much* improved. *Still* it is better for Prince Arthur that also *there* he should *not* come much in contact, as the habits of *amusement* are too constant.

But his kindness of heart to *all* is great and he would *never say* what he *ought not* to Prince Arthur.

In Prince Christian ¹ Prince Arthur will find a kind and good friend and adviser. Nothing can be happier than the Prince and Princess are together. The Queen is full of hope, tho' also of anxiety about darling Prince Arthur. But the former prevails."

Lieutenant Pickard, V.C., R.A., one of the possible equerries, was quartered at Shoeburyness, and with the project unknown to either of them, Elphinstone arranged for him and the Prince to meet "to see how far the two would agree together." The meeting was satisfactory and the appointment was duly made and turned out to be a success. There is nothing but good spoken of him in the years that followed, and of his early death the Queen wrote with sorrow for the loss of one so devoted.

In August 1866 Elphinstone wrote a most unusual request:

"Major Elphinstone wishes to refer to a subject upon which he does not feel certain of Your Majesty's approval. If it can be done without any inconvenience he would be very glad to be permitted to absent himself whilst Prince Arthur is at Balmoral. The reason

¹ Pss. Helena was married to Prince Christian in July 1866.

of his selecting this particular time is that he thought his presence could there be better spared, as Mr. Jolley will have to be in Scotland to teach the Prince and could then take charge of him as well. He likewise feels that as the Prince is now approaching to manhood, this will probably be the last occasion on which it would be advisable for him to ask for leave.

At the same time Major Elphinstone wishes to add that if there be the least possible objection he would much rather forego the leave, than run the risk of causing Your Majesty any trifling inconvenience whatever."

Replying, Her Majesty says :

"Most truly does the Queen hope that Major Elphinstone will derive benefit from his trip to Switzerland ; but she must *most earnestly* ask him to commit no imprudence of any sort, as he knows *how valuable* he is. . . ."

Thanking her for her letter Elphinstone writes from Lausanne :

"He can conscientiously state that anything like a hazardous expedition is not his object. Even were he so inclined the time of year would prevent it. But besides this he would not think it right, so long as he remains with Prince Arthur, to do anything which might mar his usefulness. His sincere hope is that when his duties are over, Your Majesty may approve of his labours, and not regret having placed so responsible a charge under his care."

The experiment of leaving Prince Arthur in charge of others less tactful in their dealings with domestics than was Elphinstone, proved to be a failure. Trouble flared up, resulting in offended dignity, and a few days after his arrival in Switzerland a telegram summoned him from the Alps to the Grampians.

Elphinstone wrote from the Rhone valley :

". . . on returning from the mountains where he had been detained for several days by a severe storm he found Your Majesty's gracious letter containing however the very unwelcome news. . . . He has just telegraphed to Your Majesty announcing the receipt of your letter and Major Elphinstone intends to leave as soon as possible for England to again take charge of Prince Arthur. He will not be able to leave this until to-morrow he fears as his things are still up in the mountains, but Your Majesty may rest assured that he will not loose a single day in returning."

Calm was duly restored, but we hear no more of any request for leave till Mr. Pickard had settled down in his post, and had been found to possess, like Elphinstone, not only the V.C., but the talent for peaceable living.

CHAPTER XVII : WORK AND PLAY

AFTER the Mediterranean tour there was little travel from the Ranger's House ; the letters to Her Majesty are written regularly. The style is formal, the script beautiful, legible and full of character. One point is, however, worth noticing. Probably owing to his trilingual education spelling was always an unsolved problem to Elphinstone. Such things as " drafts of cold air," " trays of character," " site seeing," " sleeping births " and " fairwells " are frequently mentioned ; while to the word umbrella he sometimes adds a final letter H. " Manœuvre " was another stumbling-block, and as he goes to these entertainments in several countries of Europe, there is inspiration for variations ; the result, however, does not always meet with his approval, and a blot occasionally helps him in his troubles. Some of the words in his letters have been underlined in pencil—presumably by Her Majesty—but there is no sign in her letters to him of her ever having tactlessly mentioned the word " spelling."

One other point stands out ; the weather in England is always exceptional. Certainly it was an undoubted fact that from the year 1837 to 1901 not only the 24th May but on whatever day Her Majesty performed any function, the sun was sure to shine ; apart from that the weather seems invariably to have been " most unusual for the time of year." Late in September 1865 the heat was so great as to forbid being out of doors till the evening ; the following autumn the sun was never seen at all, while " the finest day for years past " was the 1st December 1866.

We are indeed a lucky nation to have with us an everlasting source of surprise.

The uneventful days slipped by with few excitements. It was a period of concentrated work ; for the Prince an examination had to be passed, and for Elphinstone was all the planning that this should be accomplished with credit. In the reports to the Queen

we watch the child who had gone to Greenwich at the age of 12 grow to manhood. The wonders of the famous pantomime of Ali Baba with its gorgeous settings, the best and most extravagant ever seen, give way to the glories of Covent Garden, where Gounod and Rossini initiate the young man into operatic music. Shooting-parties with neighbouring hosts take the place of fireworks in November. At Marlborough House, Prince Arthur instead of "wishing the Prince of Wales goodnight, and going straight to bed without remaining even more than a minute in the smoking saloon" now frequently dines there "agreeably to Your Majesty's sanction" and spends the rest of the evening sociably with his host and hostess.

Though the child had grown to a young man, there now slip occasionally into Elphinstone's formal reports the words "the dear boy" used almost unconsciously. Also we get accounts of bad headaches and neuralgia that at moments made life very miserable for the Prince.

The garden plays a large part in everyday life and a love of growing things was planted in the boy which was to become an unflinching interest during a long life.

"... Major Elphinstone has purposely always preferred such innocent amusements for Prince Arthur, as they tend to develop the kindlier, softer qualities of his character. Besides great pains are taken to vary these amusements constantly. . . . Major Elphinstone need hardly tell your Majesty that this is really the great secret of his success with Prince Arthur, and the chief reason why the Prince has not that aversion to him, which it is but natural for many boys to have against those who so closely watch them. . . . There are of course occasional little troubles . . . which it is quite unnecessary to bring to your Majesty's notice, as but a few words from Major Elphinstone are still quite sufficient to set matters right. How long this moral influence may last it is impossible to say, but at present there is no sign as yet of its diminution."

The garden held more joys than that of growing flowers. Much time was spent in building a fort for which was procured a small cannon of brass; and there was scope in the old-fashioned shrubberies for the work of clearing out. There were occasional visits to Aldershot for field days, which brought poignant recollections to the Queen but such joy to Prince Arthur that

“ . . . Considering that the contemplated visit to Aldershot is fully engrossing the Prince's thoughts and that apparently it is present even in his dreams . . . Major Elphinstone has ordered that the work shall be made as easy and as interesting as possible.”

Elphinstone wrote a long account of one field day, as it reminded him in many of its features of the one in 1860, the last at which the Queen had been present. She answered :

OSBORNE, *July 11th, 1865.*

“ The Queen thanks Major Elphinstone for all his satisfactory letters. She quite approves of his taking Prince Arthur to Aldershot. Her heart ever sinks within her when she hears that name and thinks of those *very* happy very enjoyable days there *where* all was owing to our beloved Prince's creation, and she feels that *she* NEVER CAN go there again. . . . It seems to her as though *no one* else ought now to go there. . . .”

If Aldershot produced military education, the Thames brought naval interest. In February 1866 they paid a visit to the

“ new frigate *Endymion*. She is a wooden ship and although carrying only 21 guns, is of great length and size, and will probably be one of the prettiest ships in Your Majesty's service.”

They also inspected H.M.S. *Albert*, who had her guns in “ curious cupolas.” A week later they visited “ a ‘cigar’ ship who is expected to attain the extraordinary speed of 24 miles an hour, but this is conjectural only. . . .” The sketch that is forwarded to the Queen of this “cigar” ship might well be a portrait of a modern submarine done by a six-year-old enthusiast. One other asset was the proximity of the Observatory, to Elphinstone a great source of interest.

The reports upon Prince Arthur's lessons from his masters varied greatly. In one subject the Prince never seems to have received a good mark.

“ . . . the lessons are excellent, the only exception is German in which the most dreadful mistakes are made. The Prince knows better and could speak more correctly if he chose.”

Was he already determined that his future should not lie in Coburg?

Meticulous attention to detail was required for Elphinstone's job. A telegram announcing the Prince's safe arrival at Woolwich

had to be sent after each week-end visit. On one occasion they returned on a Saturday, and the post office was already closed till Monday morning. He

“presumed that the occasion did not warrant his sending someone specially to London, but he deeply regrets not having previously mentioned this circumstance to Your Majesty.”

In September 1865 came a letter from Sir Charles Phipps to the Queen telling of Elphinstone's loss in the death of his father. He wrote: “It is very touching to see how this devoted servant in the midst of his sorrow seems to think chiefly of his duty to Your Majesty.” Elphinstone left Greenwich without leave from the Queen, “for which he hopes the urgency will afford his excuse,” and a week later he writes from Sidmouth thanking her for a touching and gracious letter “which could not be otherwise than most soothing and gratifying to his mother, who ventures to join Major Elphinstone in offering most humbly her deepest gratitude and heartfelt thanks for this condescending kindness.” Perhaps he left this letter with his mother—it is not among the others from the Queen. We have no private letters of this period, nor do we know if his father's death put an end to the Sidmouth home, but the rare news of the family after this comes from abroad.

For Elphinstone the year 1866 was one of anxiety. There loomed ahead the first serious step in the Prince's career, his examination in open competition for entry into the Royal Military Academy. Quite early in the year it was reported that “Prince Arthur is working with a will and an energy which is very praiseworthy,” but later in the spring work was interrupted by the Prince developing what Elphinstone writes of as “hooping cough,” a mild attack for which no quarantine was considered necessary; the boy went his way cheerfully about London, at the Opera House changing the prima donna's solos into impromptu duets, and distributing whoops and praise in equal parts among the flowers of the horticultural show.

A holiday was necessary, but Elphinstone wrote urging that there should be no further interruption to work, for the examination would be the turning point in the Prince's career. If he had to enter the army without passing it “the want of knowledge which this would imply would be most unpleasant to the Prince throughout life and occasion many a bitter pang hereafter.” He told the Queen that Mr. Jolley was untiring in his exertions—no one could have done his work better or more conscientiously.

For the New Year Elphinstone wrote an appropriate anniversary letter ; a few days later he reported that the examination was starting excellently. Her Majesty replies :

OSBORNE, 4th January, 1867.

" The Queen has already telegraphed her great satisfaction at the 1st day's successful reports of our Darling Boy's examination and now wishes to thank Major Elphinstone for 3 most kind letters and for the kindest and most *feeling* expressions regarding herself, her great misfortune and consequent severe sufferings, and trials—and her comfort in, and *hope* of still more future comfort in our beloved Arthur. May God reward Major Elphinstone for his great kindness and devotion to ourselves and our dear child. *Few men feel* as Major Elphinstone and not many women even . . . The Queen cannot conclude without wishing Major Elphinstone *many* happy New Years."

When success had crowned the Prince's efforts, Elphinstone wrote :

RANGER'S HOUSE, '67.

" . . . It was a severe ordeal for Prince Arthur. . . . Your Majesty has the satisfaction of knowing that his mind has received so thorough a training that he was able to go through, most satisfactorily, an examination that has foiled many. This time 130 boys have gone up for examination, the majority older than him by from 1 to 2 years, all thoroughly well prepared and knowing that their future depends on this exertion. Prince Arthur would stand about 40th out of those 130 who are all boys picked out from the various schools as the ablest and best informed. Major Elphinstone thinks it only right to enter into these details to show your Majesty what in reality the result has been and how much therefore it redounds to Prince Arthur's credit. It had been a most bold step, yet one most successfully accomplished."

Then came congratulations—from the Duke of Cambridge and the Prince of Wales, who wished to see the papers ; from Berlin Queen Augusta showed her interest, while the Crown Princess wrote :

" But now it is my turn to congratulate you, dear Major Elphinstone, as this success is your merit ; your care and perseverance in carrying through wise and judicious plans has led to this happy result. I feel proud and happy, and grateful to *you*. How dear Mama's heart must be rejoiced.

Deeply thankful should I be to Providence if my boys were already so well started in life. I could then lie down content in my grave. . . .”

Some months earlier she had written to Prince Arthur :

“ . . . Please remember me to kind Major Elphinstone—whose advice I often wish I had here—now Willie’s education has begun in earnest, and I often feel how difficult it is, and what a responsibility is laid on one’s shoulders. . . .”

Would history have been different had the Kaiser’s education been in the hands of Elphinstone instead of the young man growing up imbued with the worst ideals of Prussian militarism and aggression ?

Her Majesty wrote :

OSBORNE, *Jan.* 26, 1867.

“ The Queen agrees in *all* the dear Crown Princess says and indeed she (the Queen) *never never can* thank Major Elphinstone *enough* for his kind, devoted and judicious care of our darling Arthur. But her gratitude *is* deep and lasting.”

Her Majesty had a natural desire to show her pleasure in her son’s success by some form of gift—she consulted Elphinstone whether it would be advisable to give him the Garter at once “ or wait till her birthday when he is 17, as she originally intended.” Elphinstone answers :

“ With reference to the ‘ Garter,’ Major Elphinstone has been carefully considering the subject, but is rather doubtful what to recommend. There can be no doubt but that Prince Arthur would be highly gratified to receive it now and that the opportunity is a good one. On the other hand, he will be so much elated by passing his examination and receiving his uniform that there may just be the fear of the two together proving too much at one time. There may likewise perhaps be an advantage of associating the gift of the Garter with the anniversary of Your Majesty’s birthday. It would then come just in time to be worn during his stay in Paris in the summer.”

The following day when they were at Osborne together, Her Majesty’s quick eyes noticed a detail that met with her disapproval. Her note is written, one might almost say, scrawled, in pencil under stress either of haste, exhaustion or annoyance, and the deciphering of it was not easy :

"She is sorry to see trouser pockets. The Prince *hated* hands in the pockets, and really to *see* Prince Alfred never with his hands *out* of them would be enough to cure anyone. He walks into dinner and sits at dinner with his hands in his pockets."

Annoyance was only momentary. Pride and pleasure remained. Baulked of her wish that Prince Arthur should immediately don the Garter, Her Majesty sent him something else to wear. A month later she writes :

OSBORNE, 21 Feb. 1867.

"The Queen sends to-day a pair of muffiteers which *she* has knitted for Prince Arthur and which she thought would keep his hands comfortable by keeping his *wrists* warm *under* the *uniform* *without being seen*. It is only the 2nd pair she has knit these many years.

It would really be well if Major Elphinstone gave Prince Arthur a hint *not* to enquire or make remarks why Princess Christian did *not* attend the reception, merely saying she was *not* very strong just now, in short without saying more to tell him not to ask questions or make remarks to anyone.¹

The Queen is *glad* to hear that dear Arthur is *so* happy at the Academy and yet it gives her heart a pang, for she fears home, *dull* home, as alas it must *ever* be in his lifetime for young men, may lose its attraction after the contact with boys and that he may lose his softness and sweetness which would be a *great* distress to her."

Elphinstone answered :

RANGER'S HOUSE, 23rd Feb. 1867.

". . . Prince Arthur is delighted with the mittens, and he will express his thanks to your Majesty by writing himself to-morrow. Their arrival was most opportune. It is the first morning this week that he has driven himself in the pony carriage, and as the air is fresh they are most welcome. Major Elphinstone need hardly add that the colour is Prince Arthur's favourite."

Then followed eighteen months during which the Prince was a cadet at the Royal Military Academy, living at the Ranger's House, and riding or driving over every day for his work. There were many compensations during this latter part of the Ranger's House period ; Mr. Pickard was with them, a congenial companion and soon to become a real friend ; the fact of the Prince being

¹ Prince Christian Victor was born on April 14th, 1867.

attached to the "Shop" brought Elphinstone into contact with many men of his own profession ; life became wider in its outlook and with more opportunities for things of interest and for meeting intelligent people. There were frequent small dinner-parties at which the Prince learnt to play his part as host. Also London was near enough for Elphinstone to see some of his friends. One of the firmest of these, Colonel Gordon "of China repute," came sometimes to dinner or lunch. "He looks such a young man to have commanded such a number of troops," Prince Arthur told his mother.

Elphinstone writing to the Queen assures her that the greater freedom has not harmed the boy. Although he had mixed with all sorts and heard vulgarisms, "interspersed with numerous slang terms, Your Majesty will not find the Prince making use of either the one or the other. He is as thoughtful and considerate for others as ever ; that healthy religious tone has not been weakened, and the competition with others to which he was formerly a stranger has tended to develop and improve his qualities. He has in fact learnt to know more of the world, but has yet withal kept his purity and innocence of mind. Major Elphinstone is well aware that he is only speaking of the present moment, after but a few months trial. He feels likewise that to preserve this satisfactory state becomes every day more and more difficult, and requires great care and judgment. The Prince is soon reaching an age when advice even, substituted for previous commands, is no longer palatable at all times and frequently produces the very opposite result ; when the 'guiding' must be done very delicately, but with judgment and tact."

Later in the year the Prince was left at the Ranger's House as his own master with Mr. Pickard in attendance. Elphinstone writes that the experiment had been an entire success :

"as Prince Arthur will become his own master in a very few years indeed, Major Elphinstone certainly thinks that it is the wisest plan to accustom him thus gradually to assume some kind of responsibility and to be occasionally removed from the constant control of a Governor. . . ."

The visit to the Paris Exhibition to which Elphinstone referred in a letter on the subject of the Garter, took place in June 1867.

On the journey from Calais to the Gare du Nord we get the earliest mention of what Elphinstone invariably describes as

"sleeping births," things not heard of again in his letters for many years. During these last days of June, he gives us a swift vision of Paris in all the pride and pomp of Empire, crowded with foreign princes and dukes from Flanders and Piedmont, Hesse, Coburg and Egypt, not to mention Wales and Cambridge. We watch them at the Tuileries, brilliant in uniforms covered with stars and orders and in richly embroidered coats riding with the Emperor to review the Garde Imperiale, and we learn how good-looking was the youth in the plain Woolwich uniform with that exquisitely fresh Garter ribbon across it. Almost can we hear the jingle of bridles as the brilliant cortège rode past the troops at attention and then watched the soldiers march by. The tired features of Napoleon III are clearly chiselled in a bronze medal struck about this date ; we read of pleasant platitudes spoken by the Empress to their young guest in the stately rooms of the Tuileries. We are conducted over St. Cloud by the Prince Imperial, "who does not appear to have grown much since 1865 and is very small for his age, but very nice and with perfect manners." They were shown over the Hotel de Ville by M. Haussmann and with Lady Cowley they visited the opera and the Théâtre Français and heard "Ernani" and "Mignon." They spent many hours at the exhibition which at first sight was disappointing and inferior to the English one of 1862. As usual it rained and it all became rather tedious and tiresome, even though they dined on Hungarian dishes which they "thought more curious than agreeable," and when the weariness of looking at pictures and pottery overcame them they fled from these long galleries of boredom to listen to Strauss's famous band from Vienna ; "thither Prince Arthur always resorts whenever tired."

The glory of the Second Empire was ending ; there was, however, still in France a glorious unconquered army and they spent some happy days among the French troops. They went to Châlons where

". . . the Emperor has very kindly placed his Pavilion at the Prince's disposal. This had to be accepted because, like at Aldershot, there was no place within miles where he could otherwise reside. . . .

". . . The chief advantage over Aldershot however, is the entire absence of dust as the ground is covered with a rough kind of grass ; and as the huge extent enables the troops to change constantly their manœuvring ground the grass does not get worn

out, and one does not see here those thick clouds of dust which frequently hide the movements of troops at Aldershot. . . .”

After inspecting the camp they dined with the General.

“A regimental band played during dinner time. Before rising the General made a very pretty speech on the ‘*entente cordiale*’ between England and France and proposing the health of Your Majesty. Throughout the entire day nothing could be more satisfactory and agreeable than the attention the officers and men showed to the Prince and apparently the good feeling there existed towards England generally. . . . It is curious to observe the different spirit of the French and the English soldier. Here every tent and the ground surrounding it was prettily ornamented. Some had collected chalk stones and cut them into various pretty ornaments, or built small castles with them; and everywhere in rear of the tents the troops had cultivated a small piece of ground to supply them with vegetables of all kinds. The soil is of the poorest possible kind, so that these gardens could not have been made without great labour and time. At Aldershot, Your Majesty will recollect, the troops cannot be got to do this, unless they get paid.”

The following day :

“. . . the manœuvres were very extended and occupied nearly four hours and were executed with great spirit and energy. There was a quickness and *elan* in the way in which these French troops marched, which is very remarkable and which is never seen with ours. . . .”

After Châlons they went to Rouen, whose streets were “even more muddy than those of London on a wet November day,” and from there they drove about the countryside reconstructing the chivalrous period of the Norman Kings of England. “The charming old chronicles of Froissart whose delightful stories are always interesting and picturesque” went with them—at the Château Gaillard they read of the deeds of Richard Cœur de Lion and they visited the castle at Falaise where William the Conqueror was born. From Bayeux, Elphinstone writes :

“. . . The chief object of interest here is of course the famous tapestry of Queen Matilda, William the Conqueror’s wife, and it is really worth the while to undertake a journey purposely to this town to see it. It represents Harold’s visit to Duke William, and

all the important incidents down to the Battle of Hastings. The vigour with which some of the figures are drawn is marvellous. The preservation of the colours of the silk is excellent . . . in fact it is one of the most extraordinary sights in Normandy and perhaps anywhere so far as English people are concerned."

Summing up the trip, as usual he speaks with praise of others :

" . . . nothing could have been more satisfactory than Mr. Pickard's manner with the Prince. There is a mixture of quiet humour and fun, a cheerful laugh, yet withal a highminded upright character and gentlemanly tone which is well suited to the Prince's character."

CHAPTER XVIII : TROUBLED DAYS

IN these letters we find that the passage of time has the power to turn insignificant details into matters of interest ; in the autumn of 1867 Prince Arthur after the journey from Balmoral back to Greenwich felt extremely tired and had a slight cold. Two days later it was Elphinstone's unpleasant duty to tell Her Majesty that her best beloved son was in bed with smallpox. At first the tone of his letters is calm. Her Majesty might rest quite assured that everything possible was being done for the Prince's comfort. He was kept amused by being read to, and Elphinstone sat in his room while writing letters, though he feared that between the darkness and the desultory conversation his handwriting might be illegible ; the Doctor was a very able man ; but the illness took a turn for the worse and the letter next day is not written in so happy a strain : " At 11 last night when Dr. Munk called there appeared some grounds for apprehension." He gives the Queen details of the Prince's pulse—there was no question of a clinical thermometer being pressed between a protesting patient's lips and a temperature chart was unheard of. The word " nurse " seems to have called up a vision very different from the figure of starched rectitude and calm efficiency that it implies to-day. Elphinstone stood out at first against the admittance of such a dreadful female, but he was overcome by the insistence of the doctors (by now no less

than four were being consulted). We are not told what unnamed orgies were expected from this woman, but on the evening of the second day :

“ Both doctors insisted on the absolute necessity of the presence of a nurse. Major Elphinstone at first combated this idea as he knew Your Majesty’s objections to anything of the kind, but as they firmly maintained their opinion it was at length decided that the nurse should sit for the night in the little study adjoining the Prince’s bedroom, but that the door between the two rooms should be shut, and that the nurse should *not* come unless she heard the Prince ring his handbell. Fortunately her presence was not needed at all. . . .”

So all passed off quietly, and we hear nothing further of the poor woman, who was then banished. Would her continued presence have helped matters? If she had had some authority on the question of diet, she might have done good, for the Prince seems to have been fed entirely upon partridge, pheasant, peaches, roast beef and claret; we next hear of him as being delirious. Elphinstone with the devoted valet Collins and later Mr. Pickard stumbled through the darkness, both mental and physical, of nursing the young man by day and night. The equally trying period after the crisis was over was cheered by that never-failing source of joy—a musical box.

“ . . . the Prince himself is not allowed to read and the room is still kept dark. Major Elphinstone never leaves him but for an occasional halfhour to get some fresh air. He has sent a groom this morning to Windsor to get one of the musical boxes, taking it upon himself to order that if there be one belonging to Your Majesty it should be given, or to whomsoever it may belong. He presumes that you will approve of this although done without your previous sanction. . . .”

Later he writes :

“ The musical boxes have arrived and the Prince is charmed to have this variety, and they usually play after his meals and towards dusk in the evening.”

There is no mention of any kind of card game, the musical boxes with volumes of the *Illustrated London News* were the

only amusements of convalescence apart from reading aloud and the selection of books sounds unexhilarating.

"Mr. Pickard reads to him English, selecting some plays of Shakespeare (it is unnecessary to say that it is an 'expunged' edition) while Major Elphinstone continues in German out of Schiller."

He assures Her Majesty that :

"for precautions sake Prince Arthur's letter to her has been literally toasted before the fire, which is supposed to be an infallible remedy."

The weather, as usual, was exceptional. A period of second summer had set in, as the thermometer one day registered 72°, it was not easy to keep the rooms at 56°, the temperature approved of by Her Majesty. For a month Elphinstone's letters, sometimes sixteen pages in length, became a daily duty. In spite of writing at times in semi-darkness the script is even and beautiful (with frequent mention of such things as "drafts of fresh air" and "basons of beeftea"). The three men attached to the Prince were untiring in their devotion and Elphinstone writes a glowing account of how useful both Mr. Pickard and Collins had been. The Queen's thanks were unstinted.

BALMORAL, Oct. 12, 1867.

"The Queen has to thank Major Elphinstone for those most kind and full letters of the 9th, 10th and 11th and wishes to express her warmest thanks for his paternal and she may add *maternal* care of our precious child during this trying illness, short though it has been.

Thank God that it has proved *so slight* and that our darling boy is recovering so fast and well, but the Queen feels all the alarm and anxiety which Major Elphinstone must have felt, so far away from the Queen. The first announcement of the indisposition and its nature gave the Queen a great shock, but Dr. Jenner soon reassured her and Dr. Munk's telegram that very night greatly relieved us. How he got it is very difficult to say ; it could not be *here*, as there is no smallpox *anywhere*.

The Queen is *much* touched at Mr. Pickard's kind and unselfish conduct. Pray tell him so.

Good Collins the Queen had great confidence in, and she

thanks him also for his devotion to our beloved child whom God has so mercifully watched over! She feels very grateful for this mercy!

The Queen *prays* that Major Elphinstone himself *may* not suffer.

For to-day she must end, but will write to the dear patient to-morrow. We have had two beautiful warm days—yesterday *quite hot*.

Tell dear Arthur we had two hauls of fish at Lock Muick to-day and caught '17 Dikken' (as Mackenzie says) in the first few seconds."

The Prince was now ordered sea air, and he and Elphinstone planned that they should go to the Lord Warden and have the yacht *Vivid* round to Dover. The very thought of it was cheering after this prolonged imprisonment, but a veto came from the Queen.

BALMORAL—Oct. 31, 1867.

"The Queen has to thank Major Elphinstone for many kind letters and very favourable reports.

She is sorry that she cannot agree with him about the yachting. That coast is a very bad one, which the Queen knows from having spent November there some years ago—very *rough* and even dangerous. The days are very short and the exposure to the wind *not* at all desirable for Prince Arthur after his illness. Being at sea moreover always affects the eyes and with the tenderness the Prince has had, high wind at sea might have been very detrimental. The objection to an hotel was very strongly represented to the Queen by Sir T. Biddulph, and Dr. Jenner agrees in it. The Queen must say she thinks *small* lodgings far *preferable*. We hope in another twelve days or a fortnight to be able to see Prince Arthur. . . ."

Two letters written at this time show that the unaccustomed strain of night as well as day nursing had told upon Elphinstone's temper. There is a hint of peevishness not to be found in any other of his letters. Had Her Majesty any idea of what *small* lodgings at English seaside resorts were really like? The accounts of them that Elphinstone received by post were most unsatisfactory and "not such as he would venture to recommend;" there was difficulty in finding anything with "the requisite appliances of baths, etc.," and where the bedrooms were not "highly objectionable"; he finally takes a whole

house, No. 25 Waterloo Crescent, Dover, which was "well situated with an open view to the sea."

There followed a fortnight when surely rebellion must have been in their hearts, as they looked at the *Vivid* lying idle in the harbour, while they were condemned to tramp the dusty esplanade, and when that amusement palled, their sole relaxation was to go and watch the arrival of the Calais boat. Day after day the sun shone and the sea was calm and placid. Is it a wonder that Elphinstone wrote in an ungracious mood?

DOVER, 6th Nov. '67.

"... It is fortunate that Prince Arthur takes an interest in collecting fossils for without that it would be very difficult indeed to find sufficient outdoor amusement or occupation for him. At a sea place like this the walks are very limited and the ground is so very flinty that riding is not pleasant. Up to the present however the Prince seems still very keen to collect some good specimens of fossils and everything is done to keep up this interest so as to prevent his thinking of going on board the *Vivid*, for to that his thoughts always will turn—there being nothing that he enjoys so much as going on board ship . . . the weather has been wonderfully fine, but if anything too hot."

From Prince Arthur's troubles we turn to those of Her Majesty; a number of Fenian outrages had occurred in the country. There were also reports of schemes to seize or assassinate the Queen, and the Government were seriously alarmed for her safety. They considered there was risk of some attempt upon her life being made during her journey from Balmoral to England. "Too foolish!!" Her Majesty exclaims in her journal and she writes indignantly on the subject in two letters to Elphinstone.

BALMORAL, Oct. 22, 1867.

"The Queen feels much the extreme kindness of Major Elphinstone's letter and of his sympathy under the very trying and painful circumstances of this Fenian alarm. *She* believes the danger *entirely* an *exaggeration* and that the *precautions* were really *not necessary*. Still it was impossible *after* what the Government and police said to avoid *taking* them—and they were and are very painful. But the Queen hardly sees anything of this. Amongst her beloved Highlanders she feels safer than anywhere else.

The accounts of Prince Arthur are most cheering thank God. . . .”

BALMORAL, *October 31, 1867.*

“ . . . The foolish alarms have compelled the Queen to travel by day which is very fatiguing for her.

We have had very fine weather which makes the Queen sad to go, and today again much mildness. Please thank Prince Arthur for his two letters.”

The journey from Balmoral to the South was accomplished without unpleasant episode, but a surprise attack upon her while she was driving in the countryside round Osborne would be difficult to prevent and persuasion was brought to bear that she should either go to London or to the comparative safety of Windsor. Her Majesty, however, treated the matter as one not of danger but of annoyance, and she refused to leave Osborne ; just before Christmas she wrote the following note to Elphinstone who was also at Osborne at that time :

“ Would Major Elphinstone mind going over to meet Prince and Princess Christian to-morrow in the Alberta ? . . . As it would be a satisfaction and relief to her if he would tell the Princess how worried and teased the Queen has been, and what *extraordinary* and really *absurd* precautions had been taken. At the same time that things were better today, people settling down and the alarm no longer so great—indeed Lord Charles Fitzroy said that *with* the precautions taken there was no danger. But he better *avoid saying* . . . that people were supposed to have *started with actually murderous designs*. The Queen herself thinks it will all be *merely* an alarm. If Major Elphinstone could do this the Queen would be very grateful. She will send him up a letter for the Princess.”

Her Majesty's tone is an interesting contrast to the alarm expressed by both General Grey and Lord Derby in the published volumes of the Queen's letters. Gallant General Grey, far from being nervous as a rule, wrote the letter of a man thoroughly frightened on her behalf, and ended “ . . . he would on his knees beseech your Majesty to consider whether it would not be better for Your Majesty to be at Windsor.” Lord Derby, who was Prime Minister, pleaded in some fifteen hundred words that she would graciously go to a safer place. But the Queen would have none of it. She writes that she “ *does not* intend making any difference in her intention of remaining here, as

settled, and must ask *not* to have this again mentioned." Heroines are not always easy to handle.

Though the nature of Elphinstone's post precluded the making of new friends, old ones played a considerable part in his life. It was many years since he and Cowell had first met, and time had strengthened their appreciation of each other's qualities. In the spring of 1868 Elphinstone sends the Queen a long description of a visit to Clifton Castle in Yorkshire, where he was best man at Sir John's wedding. This episode was of importance in Elphinstone's life, for it was in Cowell's house that some years later he first set eyes upon a young friend of Lady Cowell's.

From a wedding we turn to a sick-bed. This time it was Elphinstone who was ill. In March of '68 he underwent a small operation—was a nurse allowed inside the Ranger's House or did the invaluable Collins again take her place? Prince Arthur wrote to his mother :

"DEAREST MAMA,

Major is progressing slowly but well, he is able to sleep at night and occasionally sits up in his bed. Next week Major hopes to be able to sit up well enough to write to you, but I told him that you would not wish him to do so till he felt thoroughly fit for it. . . ."

Two days later Elphinstone wrote that

" . . . He is happy to say that although still unable even to sit up in bed, that he is at length relieved from all agonising pain. Such pain as he is now suffering from can easily be borne with patience.

He trusts that Your Majesty will excuse this illegible writing, but from the awkwardness of his position, he is unable to use his hand freely.

Prince Arthur has been *very* kind indeed. He is in excellent health and spirits."

Two days later Her Majesty answered :

WINDSOR CASTLE, *March 29, 1868.*

" . . . The Queen cannot let Prince Arthur go back without giving him a few lines for Major Elphinstone to express her earnest thanks for his kind little note—by which however she *deeply* grieves to see how much he has suffered—and she fears must still suffer. She much regrets she cannot go and see him and show all she feels for one to whom she owes so much. But

the Queen will on no account *allow* him to exert himself *soon*. He must be very *careful* and not *think* of returning to his duties till he is *quite* strong again."

CHAPTER XIX : FAREWELL, GREENWICH

"IT is most satisfactory to see how well all has answered with dear Prince Arthur. Major Elphinstone is most right and judicious in all he says."

The above was written in the autumn of 1867 ; in April 1868 a slight alteration is noticed in the letters : " Major Elphinstone " vanishes and is replaced by " Lt.-Colonel Elphinstone."

Two months later " the Queen signed Prince Arthur's commission on Thursday with much pleasure " she writes. The course at Woolwich being finished the Prince spent the next three months at Chatham, in the beautiful old Stuart house just inside the Dockyard Gates, that was later the Admiral Superintendent's Quarters. During this time he learnt the duties of an officer of Royal Engineers " the most interesting that a young officer can possibly go through," Elphinstone considered. " It has all the excitement and explosions of actual warfare without any of its dangers." We see the two men in photographs posed among bewhiskered veterans of Napoleonic wars, and the Prince was taken standing by Sir John Burgoyne, " the oldest and youngest Royal Engineer ; a copy shall be sent to Your Majesty as soon as possible." One cannot but feel that these months spent among the men of his own corps revived Elphinstone's desire to be back at his real work.

About the explosions Her Majesty showed no fear, but it was a hot summer, and the letters from Balmoral, Windsor and Osborne are all couched in terms of anxiety that the Prince should come to no harm.

" He ought certainly to avoid the great heat of the sun. . . ."

" The heat continues quite fearful and tropical. The Queen earnestly hopes Prince Arthur is not worked too hard or too much exposed to the sun for the latter is *extremely dangerous*," she writes.

A feeling of holiday was in the air. Enthusiasm is infectious. Was it Prince Arthur's glowing account of the beauties of Switzerland that determined his mother to spend a summer holiday there? In the autumn of 1867, leaving the Prince alone with Mr. Pickard at the Ranger's House with the duty of reporting his own movements and doings, Elphinstone spent a few weeks among the Alps, not only sketching and climbing, but also with the responsible task of finding a house suitable for Her Majesty to rent for a holiday. She wrote :

" . . . The temperature of the places which Major Elphinstone mentions would be totally unfit for the Queen, indeed—unless she can find bracing air—she would not think of going to Switzerland *at all*—of course a hot sun and hot days she is prepared to put up with, but there must nevertheless be *fresh* and cold air besides.

She would put up with a *few small* houses supposing *only* the Queen and her children, maids and the two other men-servants lived in *one*, the ladies and gentlemen in another, and so on ; that would do *perfectly* well—indeed she would *like THAT best* and any *little* alteration necessary she would pay the expenses for having made. *Only* let us find a quiet spot in true *mountain* scenery and fine *bracing* air.

Dear Prince Arthur writes most regularly, and very nice letters."

Six months passed before Her Majesty again mentions the idea of going abroad, and then she writes lists in minute detail of what would be needed in any house that might be found for her. She ends her letter :

" . . . The very simplest fare, 2 of my cooks enough. Probably the Queen would take 2 *Ponies* and a carriage, but *no* horses.

Inquire as to what the carriages of the country are. Perhaps some new cushions might make them comfortable enough not to necessitate the Queen taking her own carriage which would probably not be so useful for that country—Are the horses always driven from the box or not? It would be more convenient if there were room for 2 on the box—as the Queen would not feel *safe* if she had *not* Brown *with* her, and he would not be able to communicate with the people nor would he know the country.

Inquiries must be made as to the water etc. . . ."

She left England early in August as Madame la Comtesse de Kent ; Princess Louise was the first to let Elphinstone know of their safe arrival at Lucerne and almost immediately she wrote from the Pension Wallis, Lucerne :

“ I thought you might like to hear from me, how Mama likes this place. She is quite delighted with it, the view from the House is beyond all our expectations ; the house is most comfortable and the heat is not greater than it was in England, and Mama has not complained of it since we are here. Paris was very hot and she was not able to go out excepting taking a drive on our way to the station in the evening, which she enjoyed very much, as she was not recognised by anyone and had never seen much of the streets of Paris before.

I will write again when we have made some expeditions, now the post is going.

I must sign this time and with the name I here go by,

LADY LOUISE KENT.”

Anxious responsibility breathes through Elphinstone's next letter and he hopes that Her Majesty will not be disappointed and that the people of Lucerne “ will not molest you from curiosity and mistaken loyalty.”

Prince Arthur was himself shortly bound for Switzerland on a walking tour, and as Mr. Pickard had been ill, Elphinstone suggests that Major Harrison, R.E., should go with them :

“ . . . A photograph of Major Harrison is enclosed, but Your Majesty would of course not see him necessarily, as he would live in the town of Lucerne. . . . Truly rejoiced is Lt.-Colonel Elphinstone that Your Majesty is not disappointed with the scenery and that Your Majesty is enjoying her stay. This is a great relief off his mind. . . .”

Her Majesty evidently found the house rather cramped :

PENSION WALLIS, LUCERNE,

August 10, 1868.

“ . . . The Queen has to thank Colonel Elphinstone for three interesting and satisfactory letters and for the interesting enclosures. She has asked Sir Thomas Biddulph to answer about Major Harrison whom she sees no objection to—but we have no room to *spare* for a *mouse* so that neither Prince Arthur or any one should STOP here (in the house) for above an hour or

two and excepting for breakfast certainly *not* to *meals*. By a letter to Prince Arthur, Colonel Elphinstone will see how entertained the Queen is with the marvellous scenery but unfortunately since Saturday fearful heat has set in, which they have not had since 60-70 years. This cannot however *last*. . . .

. . . Could not Prince Arthur take a little tour in the Tyrol? It might enable Col. Elphinstone to see whether it ever would do for the Queen. This would always be a good *place* to stop at and from where to make further excursions."

We are not told whether Prince Arthur and Major Harrison squeezed themselves into the mousehole or not; but in an account written afterwards of this expedition, Sir Richard Harrison spoke with admiration of Elphinstone, who though far from well at the time, yet made all their plans, managed the commissariat, talked in patois to the local folk and was the best walker of the trio. They did no spectacular climbing, though they achieved several minor peaks, and sometimes marched sixteen hours out of the twenty-four. The usual detailed accounts were sent to the Queen, and Elphinstone added :

"He would give a great deal could the same fresh bracing air of the glaciers that the Prince has passed, have been present with Your Majesty at Lucerne. He hopes however, that it has not been over hot."

After Switzerland the Prince and his two companions went south, sleeping one night at Domo d'Ossola: ". . . a truly Italian town but like all Italian towns anything but clean and pleasant." They were however "enchanted with Baveno and the scenery of the Italian lakes. . . ." and it is worth noticing that it was to Baveno that the Queen went for another holiday in later years. Whatever disadvantage the Pension Wallis may have had, yet four years later, when Her Majesty again writes from a foreign villa, this time not of Elphinstone's choosing, she says: "This house is prettily situated, but not very comfortable, and not near so good as the Pension Wallis."

Towards the end of the Prince's time at Greenwich we are told of two dances, given at the Ranger's House in return for the hospitality received. At the first one the rooms were "richly decorated with flowers and the excellent orchestra played in a small arbor." The day chosen was the auspicious anniversary of the Queen's wedding "and will ever be looked

back to by the Prince with great delight." It was a great success and then at the forbidding hour of 5 a.m. on that February morning when the last bow had been made and the last curtsy swept to the royal host, when the rumble of carriage wheels had faded into silence, Elphinstone turned back through the empty, dishevelled rooms to get through his final duty—a long descriptive letter to the Queen. Had it been June, with the unaccustomed shadows turning the Park into a mysterious, unknown land, and calling him to go forth afterwards with horse or sketch-book, one would not be surprised. But to most people, at five o'clock of a winter's morning, after a long day's work, one place and one place only calls imperatively.

It needed a skilled pen to tell of the final ball at the Ranger's House for the night held an unrehearsed episode. The letter starts calmly. Elphinstone presents his humble duty to Her Majesty and begs to state that the small dance which Prince Arthur gave the previous night went off most satisfactorily. To increase the available space a tent had been erected in the garden, with a covered passage leading to it from the second drawing-room. There was a momentary contretemps—*un tout p'tit rien* as the French song runs—when by accident some paper ornaments in this passage fell down and caught fire. A gentleman standing near put his foot upon the flames and thought that all was extinguished and no further damage would arise. Then by degrees the real affair is unrolled before us, and as we continue to read we find that the gentleman, though prompt, had unfortunately not been thorough and we realise that a spark

"came in contact with the tent which immediately caught fire. The fire spread to the dancing room and of course, frightened people very much as two of the muslin curtains caught fire. The water had however been laid on in different parts of the building and in less than four minutes everything had been put out without *any* damage done beyond the destruction of the entire tent, a passage and the seats it contained. People were naturally very frightened at first . . . but the cotillon which closed the dance gave a most happy termination. . . ."

Here we say farewell to the Ranger's House. The Prince's training is finished and he is ready to take the first step in a long life of work for his country. The scene shifts to the other side of the Atlantic.

CHAPTER XX: NORTH AMERICA

THE first mention we get of Prince Arthur's coming visit to Canada is early in January 1869. By February all plans were nearly complete for him to join the Rifle Brigade, and serve with them for a year at Montreal. The Prince was to leave England on the 14th August, but it was not till the middle of July that the Government suddenly thought that there might be some risk in his going abroad. The headquarters of the Fenian organisation was at Buffalo, which lies in the U.S.A. just across the border, some 300 miles from Montreal. Nearly eighteen months earlier in Australia the Fenians had attempted to assassinate Prince Alfred and at frequent intervals there had been rumours of risings in Canada or the U.S.A. and threats against the royal family. The reports called for from Sir John Young, the Governor-General of Canada, and from Mr. Thornton, Her Majesty's Minister at Washington, both treat of the risk as inconsiderable—

“Expressions made use of by blustering Irishmen, but I do not think they mean much,”

writes the latter. Elphinstone urged that nothing new had arisen to upset these long-considered plans. Lord Clarendon, however, wrote to Her Majesty on July 29, a fortnight only before the Prince was to sail: “the more Lord Clarendon reflects upon it, the more desirable it appears to him that Prince Arthur should not go to Canada at the present moment. . . .”

After a discussion with Lord Granville and Elphinstone, Mr. Gladstone wrote to Her Majesty:

II, CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE,

July 31, 1869.

“. . . If, as would appear, prudence recommends that Prince Arthur's safety should not be exposed to the risks which have been humbly stated to Your Majesty, then the next question which arises is, how to arrange a departure from the present plans in such a way as not to excite speculation; and give rise to constructions which might indicate, indeed, but in indicating, grossly exaggerate the true cause.

It is therefore humbly suggested to Your Majesty that the

Prince's voyage might take place as intended, with the subsequent movements which were to precede his joining at Montreal ; and that he might then be recalled to Europe for some other suitable and adequate purpose. Possibly to attend the projected opening of the Suez Canal might be just such a purpose. Clearly it ought to be one of an appropriate and even telling character, so as at once when announced to satisfy the public mind. . . ."

Even Sir Thomas Biddulph writing to Her Majesty looked at the matter from the angle of safety first, "should there be a rising and his regiment ordered to repel it, how could the Prince then come away from the fighting?"

Her Majesty's answer to Mr. Gladstone shows no craven spirit :

Aug. 1, 1869.

"The Queen has received Mr. Gladstone's 3 letters and thanks him for them.

From what she hears from him and from Colonel Elphinstone, she is glad to see that he and Lord Granville have to a certain extent modified their opinion relative to Prince Arthur going to Canada. Of course, it would be wrong to run any risk, and the Queen's anxiety about her dear child would be far too great to let her for a moment think of doing so if the danger really is so great. But the Queen cannot make out that anything new has occurred to cause this, and if it is thought better for Prince Arthur not to remain as was intended, that may be done. But it must be remembered that Prince Arthur's *military career* will suffer severely if what has been carefully planned and worked out for him for months, not to say years, is at a moment's notice to be completely upset and this idea of sending him to the opening of the Suez Canal, is not one of use to his profession, or good for him in any way. A young Prince should be made to work hard and not to be always representing at great ceremonies. The Queen is anxious to keep him employed as other young men, and above all not idling at home, exposed to many temptations which beset all young men, but Princes more than any others. The Queen besides doubts the policy of sending one of her sons to the opening of the Suez Canal, considering the excitement and irritation for the Sultan and his Government against the Viceroy."

In accordance, therefore, with Her Majesty's wishes, the plans for the Canadian visit went forward. Early in August Elphin-

stone went to Osborne to take leave of Her Majesty, and we see what infinite trouble she took in her kindness to people, even over quite small points :

“ The Queen sends Colonel Elphinstone a small souvenir on this the eve of his departure with our beloved Child on this distant voyage ; its only value is that *she* in former happy days wore it herself having received it from her dear Mother. She begs Colonel Elphinstone to take as much care of his own health—which is so valuable—as he can.

Dear Arthur must not over exert himself for he looks very thin and *not* very strong though quite healthy. Too great exposure to the sun must be avoided.

The Queen need not repeat to Colonel Elphinstone the necessity of taking every possible precaution against any possible evil intention and to avoid anything of a *foolhardy* nature. Lastly she asks Colonel Elphinstone to let us have the days on which we can write and the address to which we are to direct.

The Queen feels *very* much parting with this dear good Boy.”

At Osborne that same day is written Elphinstone’s thanks for the gift of a jewelled pin “ which he will ever value most highly, more especially from the associations which are attached to it.” Two days later he left Osborne and on arrival at Southampton on his journey to London he was handed the following telegram from the Queen :

“ The carriage came to the wrong door and I was unable to wish you goodbye as I was most anxious to do. I am much distressed at this. God bless you.”

To catch him at Buckingham Palace before they sailed she wrote :

OSBORNE, Aug. 12, 1869.

“ The Queen was so distressed not to be able to take leave of Colonel Elphinstone as she had wished to do—by an extraordinary mistake in bringing up the Carriage to the wrong door. She wishes to say one thing which she omitted, viz. to ask and *insist* that Colonel Elphinstone should make use of Mr. Pickard as an amanuensis very frequently and especially in giving descriptions so as *not* to tire him more than is absolutely necessary.

It cost the Queen very much to part with her darling good child who is universally beloved.

(Signed) THE QUEEN.”

After a smooth passage, the swiftest on record, 6 days and 17 hours from Queenstown, their arrival at Halifax was telegraphed to Balmoral on August 23rd and three days later on "that dear day" the Prince Consort's birthday, Elphinstone writes from Halifax giving excellent accounts of the Prince and enclosing newspaper cuttings about his arrival.

During the Canadian visit, Elphinstone's letters alternate with long "Journals" which he writes to the Queen in the first person singular, giving her details of their travels. Soon after their arrival the Prince went moose shooting in one of the wildest parts of Nova Scotia and Elphinstone writes several thousand words of description, that read like an exciting boy's story.

An occasional newspaper extract is sent home "which may amuse your Majesty."

" . . . His close and striking resemblance to his Royal Mother was the subject of general comment, and perhaps tended to increase our admiration for him. He was dressed as a gentleman of the period, in morning walking costume—dark blue coat with rolling velvet collar closely buttoned, light trousers, black silk tie with knot. In every particular with scrupulous neatness. We have already said that his features closely resemble those of his mother. His complexion is light, and the face adorned with a pair of neatly trimmed whiskers of the most silky and delicate description. . . ."

Canada had become a "Dominion" in February 1867, but Her Majesty was evidently not yet accustomed to the new word.

BALMORAL, *Sept. 15, 1869.*

"The Queen must thank Colonel Elphinstone *very much* indeed for his two most satisfactory and interesting letters of the 22nd and 26th ult. Nothing can be more gratifying and reassuring. . . . The accounts of the good effects of his presence in Nova Scotia are most gratifying. The more so as the Queen feels that *this* is carrying the beloved Prince's hopes and wishes for (undecipherable) children and the good they would do the *Colonies*. Hereafter *no* doubt their descendants would *spread* and settle in the Colonies."

As soon as they landed Elphinstone had become aware of trouble in the Dominion, and before long it was clear that they had arrived at a critical moment. From all sides came the same

story ; intense loyalty to the Crown, coupled with such exasperation with the Home Government that the only question remaining was whether they should secede on their own or join the U.S.A. The Colonial Secretary at Halifax wrote to Elphinstone :

“ We were in a bad state before your arrival. Our blood was hot and we were all out of sorts, and if we had not been able to ‘ vent it ’ in loyal enthusiasm, it must have taken a very different direction. To tell the truth I never liked the look of things politically less than early this summer. But the air is comparatively clear now, thanks to the Prince’s visit and manner.”

Elphinstone wrote to Her Majesty :

“ The withdrawal of troops in the Dominion had caused people to believe that these provinces would be entirely abandoned by the Mother Country and that their attachment to the Throne and devotion to Your Majesty were disregarded. . . .

It is impossible to disguise that at the time of his arrival there was a feeling, almost amounting to indignation at the strictures passed upon Canada and its loyalty by the English press as well as at the harsh language used towards them by the Government. This feeling appeared universal and was expressed quite as loudly by the staunchest loyalists as by the radical annexationists. They thought not only that England was anxious to sever her connection with the Colony, but was also indifferent as to whether or not it should be done courteously. Prince Arthur’s sudden appearance at this critical moment arrested this feeling and gradually revived the dormant loyalty, which increased day by day, until it assumed that loud universal expression to which it has now attained. Everybody rejoices that he has come, and thinks that nothing could have been better timed. All are likewise delighted that the English press should at length acknowledge that there is no want of loyalty in the people of Canada. Most anxious are they that their loyalty should be known and appreciated in England. . . .

The feeling of loyalty out here and the devotion to Your Majesty is so extraordinary that it is impossible to convey any idea of it at home. The receptions the Prince has received out here, especially in Western Canada, are far more loyal and hearty than anything that I have ever seen given at home even to Your Majesty ; and the more one knows the people, one sees that this feeling is not on the surface, like in Ireland, but deep and

true. There is too much Scotch blood out here to lead them to make a display of feeling which they don't possess, and the enthusiasm shown is more what it must have been in parts of Scotland towards Charles Stuart in 1745.

Often I have heard repeated in true Northern dialect 'there is not one of us that would not lay down his life for the Queen's son.'

A curious interview occurred this morning. The American Colonel commanding at Buffalo called to pay his respects and to be introduced to the Prince. He hoped the Prince would pay them a visit, and if so, he would be right loyally received and a house etc. placed at his disposal. He then closed with this sentence 'Now sir, we don't know you, but we do know your Mother right well, and we guess Sir, that there is no woman like Her. Yes Sir, we admire Her and we are anxious to see you, because we think that a son of such a mother is worth knowing.'

The language may be crude but it shows Your Majesty what is thought out here—I confess that I have seen more loyalty out here than at home. The mass of people are as true as possible, but they are irritated when they are constantly asked whether they would not desire independence and whether it would not be better that they should be independent, and this irritation one can quite understand. Prince Arthur's presence has done a great deal to allay this . . . and his visit has drawn their thoughts away from political dispute and roused their loyalty . . . to a degree very remarkable and the wish to honour him and through him Your Majesty is now not only confined to Canada but has spread beyond the borders into the States. . . . Letters have already been received hoping that the Prince would visit the States. Every day brings out more strongly the great importance of this visit and Your Majesty ought to be sincerely congratulated upon deciding that the Prince should start for Canada. . . . Truly glad is Colonel Elphinstone that nothing whatever interfered with the carrying out of this visit to Canada. Your Majesty will now see that he was not wrong in feeling confidence as to the result."

"Safety first" was not Elphinstone's principle in life. At first sight it appears foolhardy that he should have allowed the Prince to visit Buffalo, the headquarters of the Fenians, but he seems to have been justified by events. From Buffalo had

originated reports of a plan to secure the Prince's person as a hostage.

"Such futile reports have thus been silenced altogether by the Prince's visit. He spent there 4 to 5 hours, driving about all the principal streets and lunching at the Hotel, showing himself everywhere.

His guide and companion throughout the day was Mr. Fillmore, ex-president of the United States, a most agreeable, well-informed and apparently most able man. The Prince returned to Niagara in the evening much pleased with what he had seen. I attach great importance to this visit to the very centre of Fenianism, and I trust that its complete success will tend thoroughly to reassure Your Majesty as to Prince Arthur's safety. But at the same time, I am most anxious to repeat that neither this visit nor any other has been undertaken without every possible previous enquiry and precaution; great care however being taken that these shall be unobserved. . . ."

Six weeks later he wrote from

ROSEMOUNT, MONTREAL, 5 Nov. 1869.

"Lieut.-Colonel Elphinstone presents his most humble duty. . . .

Your Majesty will be pleased to hear that all talk of Fenian action against the Prince is now at an end in this town.

It was a cry got up by some, but has been found to be unpopular with the majority, and utterly useless as well.

The best information on this point Colonel Elphinstone has obtained in a curious way. An American newspaper correspondent, who followed in the Prince's wake on his tour through the Western Provinces, chiefly as he afterwards stated to find fault and abuse, in order to suit the Fenian tastes, for whose paper he writes, was so much struck by the quiet unassuming manner of the Prince as well as by the gentlemanly way in which he himself was treated, that he came forward at last and volunteered to give the first possible information of any Fenian movement. This man attends their meetings, and has given more accurate information to Colonel Elphinstone than that received by the Government. His last interview with the Fenian Head centre at New York was to the effect that no attempt against the Prince had ever been contemplated and had in fact been forbidden by the chief, as it might embroil them with the United States Govern-

ment, which they would not do, and that moreover, they themselves could not possibly gain anything by it. . . .”

The Prince's opinion of Canadians is written to his mother from Toronto: “. . . The more I visit Canada the more I like and admire the people. They are a set of fine honest free thinking but Loyal Englishmen. . . . I should like you so much to understand their character and admire them as I do. . . .”

For nearly two months before reaching Montreal he had toured the country, and each town they visited vied to outdo its neighbour in loyal receptions. Torchlight processions, fireworks and every kind of entertainment greeted him. Halifax, Quebec, London, Toronto and Ottawa all gave him enthusiastic welcome. He on his side showed unfailing courtesy to all. Elphinstone wrote :

“. . . In the evening the Prince attended a ball given by the City and as usual went through his performance of dancing Quadrilles etc. with all the principal married ladies of the place, while a somewhat more liberal selection was made of young and pretty ones for the fast dances. He gets however a fair share of ugliness as well as age. . . .”

Everywhere the Prince's “charm of manner his kind heartedness and as the American landlady said ‘his no airs at all’” were received with joy. At Rideau Hall where they stayed with Sir John and Lady Young polite deference turned to genuine friendship. “He is a dear, good boy whom one cannot help loving for his own sake,” wrote his hostess, while of Elphinstone she added, “he is a most charming person, so cultivated and clever, and devoted to his duty, also Mr. Pickard, they are so *steady*.”

General Sir Charles Windham, who was in command of the troops, wrote to the Duke of Cambridge an account of Prince Arthur's reception at Montreal, and the Duke quoted his words to the Queen :

BALMORAL, *Nov. 2, 1869.*

“The Queen writes this last evening of our stay here with a heavy heart to thank Colonel Elphinstone for his two very interesting letters of the 8th and 17th Oct. She has also a letter from the Duke of Cambridge in which he ¹ expresses himself in

¹ Sir Charles.

most gratifying terms about dear Arthur, and it is *plainly* and *bluntly* expressed and therefore doubly gratifying.

Everything seems to have been so well arranged and managed everywhere thanks to the care and wisdom of Colonel Elphinstone. But the Queen is terribly afraid that he is knocking himself up and she *entreats* him to give himself as *much* rest as he can.

The Queen knows Sir J. and Lady Young well, and for many years she was very handsome and an agreeable, clever woman. Sir John was a great friend of dear Sir Robert Peel's.

We had a very heavy fall of snow last week, but it has almost entirely disappeared except just where there was great drifts, some were of 7 to 8 feet!! and warm weather returned with great rapidity on the 30th when Hallowe'en with plenty of torches was kept. We leave this to-morrow at 2 p.m. A *dreadful wrench* to the Queen who feels here not only pure fine air but an atmosphere of loving affection around her."

Sir Charles's "blunt words" were:

"His Royal Highness has really done well (no humbug about it I assure you). With the appearance of a well-looking and high bred youth he has just the right amount of diffidence and frankness to make the most favourable impression."

(Continuing and telling of driving in the royal carriage through an enthusiastic populace he says:)

"The carriage was filled with bouquets, many of which hit us on the head in getting there. . . . The Prince stood his late hard work very well. His whiskers progress daily and he is considerably browned. . . ."

Towards the end of October, when they reached Montreal, their reception was "most striking," but here their travelling ceased for a while, and the Prince settled down to his regimental duties. These as a rule only lasted till lunch time and allowed opportunity for sport, etc. For safety's sake

"he enters the house invariably before dark and never goes out unless attended by at least two persons, and his huge St. Bernard dog, which so far as security goes is quite a host in himself, and would not allow anyone to touch the Prince. . . ."

On December 2nd, 1869, Her Majesty wrote from Windsor:

"The Queen has to thank Colonel Elphinstone for two very kind and interesting letters of the 5th and 12th November with the very gratifying enclosures. The Queen has indeed no longer any fear about the Fenians and she and all the Ministers are greatly struck by the wonderfully judicious prudent and (undecipherable) conduct of Colonel Elphinstone. This is nothing new to the Queen but it is very gratifying to her to see how he is appreciated by the Govt.

The Queen can give only a tolerable account of herself. She has had much fatigue and it resulted in neuralgic pains in her face and one of her bad headaches.

She has enjoyed 5 quiet days at Claremont where the house is most comfortable and the air excellent, very much indeed. The Princess of Wales and *new* Baby are going on well."¹

Crossing this last letter, and written from Montreal, Elphinstone says :

3rd Dec. 1869.

"... Your Majesty is quite correct in doubting the rumours of a Fenian raid during the winter. No troops in the world could face the cold at night unless provided with furs, and that would be too expensive a luxury to give to the Fenian marauders. The cold has set in earlier than usual and therefore frustrated their plans; besides money fails them.

The cold is indeed very great."

Though the Prince's courtesy and thoughtfulness for others won all hearts, yet the success of these months was not entirely due to his personality; much hard work also went to achieve the smooth running of affairs, and the bulk of this work naturally fell upon Elphinstone. The travelling needed a great deal of planning, and the official functions much forethought. In Elphinstone's own words, the situation required

"very delicate handling and care not to offend either the prejudices or the honest spirit of the people as has alas! been too often the case. . . . Every endeavour is made to pacify the various nationalities. As a curious instance of this, Colonel Elphinstone may mention that at one of the balls here, given by the French Canadians, all English were to have been excluded. The judicious selection, however, of the Prince's partners at a public ball 3 days previous, so greatly gratified and softened the

¹ Princess Maud, later Queen of Norway.

French people that next morning invitations were issued to the English Canadians to attend the French ball!

Things of this kind are of daily occurrence, and the Prince's immense popularity is to a great extent due to the way in which he has succeeded by constant care and watching to smooth the little differences and jealousies. . . ."

Of Sir John Young, Elphinstone wrote :

" . . . His position has been a most difficult and not an enviable one. To assimilate the constant difference of opinion between the Home Government and that of Canada . . . has been no easy task, and certainly a most thankless one. Nevertheless Sir John's great tact, his sterling qualities and sound judgment as well as his equable temper have always overcome every obstacle and smoothed many a difficulty. He is universally liked and highly appreciated. . . ."

The early winter passed quietly. They liked the climate—there was a freshness and clearness about it most invigorating. Elphinstone wrote from Montreal that he had never felt better in his life and enjoyed the cold stimulating air " . . . If one only could transfer the present climate here to England it would exactly suit Your Majesty. . . ." There was plenty of skating and some gay sleigh parties with what he calls a "four and hand." The Prince has his own sleighs "which are now completed and look very handsome, with the black bear-skins trimmed with white and Garter blue. A photograph will be sent to Your Majesty."

Many photographs were sent home ; of the officers of the Rifle Brigade in uniform, posed standing in front of their barracks in the snow, some of them wearing racquet-shaped Canadian snowshoes ; there were photographs of the Prince playing in a curling match, of Lady Young and her house party grouped around him on the steps of a porch, or playing croquet on a lawn overlooking lake and mountains, sitting about in wrought-iron chairs or equally uncomfortable seats of "rustic" woodwork.

Some magnificent balls were given in Prince Arthur's honour and he in return gave a number of dinners and several dances. There was an ice carnival, where they all appeared in fancy dress, the Prince in white with dark flowing curls as Charles II and Elphinstone in eighteenth-century court dress.

"The rink was tastefully decorated with flags and transparen-

cies and brilliantly lit with gas. . . . Almost all the ladies here are beautiful skaters, and it is quite wonderful to see them dance on the ice. . . .

By the 'parcel delivery' post of this evening Colonel Elphinstone sends some dried maple leaves as specimens of the Canadian Autumn tints. Some of them are very curious. They have been varnished to reproduce the exact brilliancy that they have when fresh. This parcel will probably arrive three days later."

During the autumn Elphinstone had managed to do a good deal of painting, taking some lessons from the Canadian water-colourist Jacobi, and becoming the possessor of a number of his sketches. Elphinstone's love of mountains and woodland gave him a sympathetic understanding to paint this new land; and in some of his rapid notes put in with a liquid brush we get a more vivid idea of the riot of autumn colour than from either his own conscientious studies or the stippled brush of his master; the gold and amber, scarlet and orange reflected in the calm waters of the Ottawa river or the blue dusk creeping over the forest land are given to us in swift touches. He never had too much of that enemy to good water-colour work—superfluous time.

On the 31st December 1869 Elphinstone wrote:

"To-morrow, New Year's day, is kept here very much like formerly in France—Gentlemen are expected to go round and pay their visits to all their friends. To do the same, would have been impossible for the Prince without giving offence. Colonel Elphinstone has therefore compromised the matter by asking Lady Windham and her staff to come up here and receive in the Prince's house. People seem delighted to have an opportunity of thus seeing the Prince as well, and he avoids giving offence to any or creating jealousies."

Later he writes:

". . . A little before 12 o'clock Lady Windham arrived here accompanied by the officers of the staff and their wives who took up their position in a most formal array in the drawing-room. The officers were in 'undress' uniform, the ladies all in 'Black velvet.' No less than 382 people called, and shook hands with the Prince, and the ceremony lasted until about 4 o'clock. In the adjoining room was a refreshment table with a continuous luncheon during the whole time. Everybody seemed pleased and

the good effect produced is shown by the circumstance that among those who called were three noted Fenians, one a head centre ! ”

Six weeks later Sir Charles Wyndham died suddenly of heart disease. Elphinstone then writes :

“ . . . To-morrow the Prince will attend the funeral of poor Sir Charles Windham, which is to take place with all the military honours due to his rank. The Prince will attend, *not* with his Regiment, but by himself in order to pay a higher tribute of respect to the family.

Sir Charles was liked by everybody and doted on the Prince. He frequently referred to Your Majesty's having introduced him to Prince Arthur when quite a baby after the Crimean War. . . . ”

Young Mary Wyndham, at this time a child, was twenty years later as Mary Hare, to find a lasting friend in Elphinstone's wife.

In January the cold became intense :

“ . . . The accumulation of snow in the streets is so great that the carriage, or rather sledge way is many feet above the foot-path and careful driving is requisite to prevent an upset. . . .

Since Colonel Elphinstone last wrote there has been one of those extraordinary changes in weather so unknown in Europe. From 43° degrees Fahrenheit the temperature suddenly fell to 21° degrees *below* zero ; a sharp dry cold most peculiar, making things hard and brittle and even giving to wood a metallic sound. . . . So dry is the air and so charged with electricity, that the Prince after being rubbed on the back for a few times with a fur glove, was able to light the gas with the electric spark discharged from his fingers ! Colonel Elphinstone would not believe this until he saw it, and he is quite prepared therefore at Your Majesty's doubting the fact.

The Prince is the picture of health.”

During the American Civil War there had been tension between the States and Great Britain and there still remained some bitter feeling during the Prince's visit to Washington in January 1870. In less formal phrases than those used in his letters to the Queen, Elphinstone wrote to Cowell from New York on February 1st :

“ MY DEAR COWELL,

We arrived here 2 days ago after a stay of much interest at Washington. The Prince was there the guest of Mr. Thornton,

our Minister, whom you probably recollect, and so far as he was concerned nothing could have been nicer. He himself is a most agreeable person and Mrs. Thornton is particularly pleasant. The Prince enjoyed their kind hospitality and as usual became an immense favourite with everybody. It is impossible however to deny that there was a studied stiffness, almost want of ordinary courtesy in the behaviour of the President.¹

We heard various reasons that the Red Republican party were anxious that England should be made to understand that the feeling towards her was less friendly than formerly and that therefore the cold shoulder should be given to the Prince. So far as the President was concerned it certainly was the case. With the others we had not sufficient opportunity of judging, because the only hospitality shown was that of Mr. Thornton himself. The one exception to that was Mr. Fish the Foreign Secretary, a man of wide prudent outlook and one who thoroughly esteems England and honours the Queen and Her family. He was particularly civil in every way and entertained the Prince at dinner, and was anxious to overcome that studied stiffness of the President. The latter I presume acts entirely in the interests of his own party which is supported by the Irish element, and he therefore feels himself bound to keep up a little unfriendliness. Hearing that this was the case we went first to Washington and this has answered well. The Prince's charming and even winning manner gradually made its way. He became popular, in spite of obstacles, all the papers but one are in his favour, and I hear that even Washington feels a little ashamed of itself. A strong re-action has consequently taken place here, notwithstanding the Irish element. People are most anxious to show him every possible hospitality; and every hour of our time here is almost occupied. When we went to the theatre on Saturday, the box occupied by the Prince was ornamented with English and American flags, and at the end of the 1st Act the Band played God Save the Queen. On entering Church yesterday the organ did the same. It is true that among the applause a few hisses were heard; but that of course must be in so mixed a community, and it does not interfere with the opinion of the majority. It comes from the Irish element which has likewise been kind enough to threaten the Prince's life while here. I treat that threat however with utter contempt, taking only sufficient precaution to prevent any mad attempt. We never there-

¹ General Grant.

fore go out under 5 in No. i.e. one on each side of the Prince and 3 behind. This guards all possibility.

It is a curious country, well worth seeing, and as a study still more so. But defend me from living in it. There is an amount of vitality and energy, very remarkable, and far greater than in Canada. If it comes to blows at present Canada must go to the wall as its population is too small, but I would confidently back it were it only 2 to 3 in numbers. There is greater stamina, more real courage in the English Canadian than in the American.

I was certainly disappointed with Washington. Trollope describes it exactly: 2 and 3 splendid buildings separated by a wilderness of mud. We saw of course all there was and were fortunate enough to hear a rather animated debate in which Genrl. Butler declaimed in his most violent language. Individual people here are most anxious to be civil and are doing everything in a truly magnificent style. The change to the studied stiffness of Washington is very remarkable. We are asked out every night to dinner and to at least 2 dances. Although Republican the people here are dying to talk and dance with the Prince.

Prices of everything have risen immensely since the war. House rent especially. In a decent quarter of the town a small house just suitable for you, can not be got here under £600 per annum, *unfurnished*. Other things are in proportion. At this hotel the charges are Bottle of Sherry 8 dollars, claret 15 dollars!

On Saturday next we leave for Boston to attend Peabody's funeral, and then we return to Canada to be present at the opening of the Ottawa Parliament."

Writing to the Queen about Washington, Elphinstone says:

"Next to the Prince during dinner sat General Sherman who made himself particularly agreeable and amusing." Of Mrs. Grant: "Pretty she certainly is not, but apparently an honest good-natured and simple minded little body. The President himself is a man of small stature, square built and very silent."

Mr. Thornton's comment on the visit was:

"I think that as H.R.H. was in Canada it was almost a necessity that he should pay a visit to this country. I could have wished that the President had been more courteous. . . . But he is naturally the most uncouth man I ever met with. . . . As far as the Prince himself was concerned the visit has undoubtedly

been of service . . . everyone spoke in the highest terms of his engaging address and his amiable and agreeable conversation with which the Americans were more particularly pleased in so young a man as it is a rare quality among themselves. . . .”

New York and Boston were both anxious to dispel the impression of Washington :

“The people have been extremely civil,” writes Elphinstone from Boston to the Queen.

“They hate and despise monarchy, but there is nevertheless a strongly expressed love towards Your Majesty’s person and character. Wherever one goes there is but one feeling on this point. But throughout the time there was constant anxiety. Every possible precaution was taken and although not much value ought to be attached to threatening letters, they came in too frequently to disregard them altogether, especially as they showed an intimate knowledge of one’s movements. During that last three days at New York the Prince was closely watched by the Fenians, and followed by some of them day and night. Something was to have been done the last evening of his stay for which six men were told off. What the plot was it is impossible to say, as the men were baffled by the precautions taken and by a sudden change in the hour of departure. Two of the men appear to have been armed. These two had followed the Prince for several days. The precautions taken however, rendered every attempt impossible as the result has shown. At the same time Colonel Elphinstone can assure Your Majesty that he is very glad that the Prince is now leaving the U.S.A. as there was great and constant anxiety during the last few days when he saw clearly that the threats were more than mere words. It was necessary to show a bold front with an apparent thorough disregard, using however every possible precaution. Everything was done that could be, and the result has proved most satisfactory. Most sincerely does Colonel Elphinstone therefore congratulate Your Majesty upon the visit of the Prince to the States.

He cannot close however, without saying how much the Prince is indebted to Mr. Thornton our Minister. . . . He has had a most difficult position during the Prince’s stay at Washington and held his own with admirable tact and judgment. Notwithstanding his untitled rank he is highly appreciated out here and liked by everybody and, he certainly deserves great praise.”

We get an account of the New York visit from a different angle in a newspaper cutting sent home to the Queen.

New York Herald, Jan. 22, 1870.

. . . Very soon after arrival (at the hotel) the Prince's party sat down to lunch in waiting for them. All those accompanying him to the hotel joined him in this dejeuner. Of course it was strictly a private affair. A reporter was ambitious to elicit the topics in the intervals of serving the various courses. He got hold of a waiter who assisted in serving the edibles.

"You were present at the dinner?" began the inquisitorial searcher after news.

"Yes, sir," replied the waiter, laconically.

"You heard what they said?"

"Yes sir."

"You know the topics they discussed?"

"Yes sir."

"Did the Prince say anything about his proposed visit to President Grant?"

"No sir."

"Did you hear him say how he liked the looks of the American people?"

"No sir."

"Well what was said?"

" 'These are very fine oysters,' said the Prince," answered the waiter.

" 'I agree with you,' said Mr. Thornton."

" 'So do I,' said Colonel Elphinstone."

"And that's all the information you have to give?" exclaimed the reporter.

"All sir," was the blunt reply.

On their return to Canada, Her Majesty wrote :

WINDSOR CASTLE, Feb. 24, 1870.

"The Queen has to thank Colonel Elphinstone for two most interesting letters of the 7th and 11th February which she has just received. She congratulates Colonel Elphinstone on having our dear Child, so very dear for the admirable way in which he has behaved, and which has conquered *all* enmity—*safe* back at Montreal.

She thanks Colonel Elphinstone *again* and *again* for the *care* and *wisdom* he has shown in managing this *most difficult* visit.

From all sides does she hear the most gratifying accounts of our beloved Child's conduct and success. Indeed she has *never* felt so proud of any of her children as she does of her darling Arthur. May he only continue *after so much success* as good and simple as he always was. . . .

But she grieves for the intense anxiety which all this has cost Colonel Elphinstone and she certainly hopes it has not hurt his health. . . . Pray take care. . . .

The Queen can say no more to-day but to express her great regret at poor Sir Charles Wyndham's death and to ask him to condole with the poor widow. . . ."

A number of the Queen's old friends had recently died and on April 14th she writes from Osborne :

" . . . the death of Good General Grey will have greatly shocked Colonel Elphinstone. She has given Prince Arthur all the details. It has cast a great gloom over us all ! He had his failings and crochets and a difficult temper, but he was so clever, very honest, kind hearted and most agreeable when in good spirits and few people will be more missed.

The Irish Land Bill is giving a good deal of trouble."

Condoling on the loss of General Grey, Elphinstone writes :

" At the present moment, when the Irish Land question may create serious political difficulties, General Grey's advice would be most valuable.

The Irish Element is likewise causing much unpleasantness here. The Fenians are daily threatening to make a raid along the border, and putting Canada to much expense in calling out the Militia. The Red River question likewise creates difficulties and will involve a further outlay of money. The Canadians do not appear to grudge this, although both are questions concerning the Imperial Government quite as much, if not more, than Canada, but they feel deeply grieved at the parsimonious treatment by the Home Government at such a moment.

Fortunately, the popularity gained by Prince Arthur will do much to keep closely cemented the bond of Union, but were the feeling at present that which it was, on his first arrival, the chagrin of the Canadians would be loudly expressed.

Colonel Elphinstone can assure Your Majesty that Prince Arthur's stay here has done far more good than anyone at home can imagine."

By April there was fresh talk of Fenian trouble. Elphinstone wrote from Montreal :

“ Serious reports of the Fenian movement have come in from the frontier and the Militia have all been called out. The Prince's battalion is likewise under orders to move to the front and will start at once should anything take place. Colonel Elphinstone does not however anticipate anything serious. Should anything occur the Prince will act as A.D.C. to Lord Alexander Russell, a position suited to his fancy.”

On May 24th there were fresh reports of a Fenian raid :

“ Two days previously they had held a public meeting at New York, and had openly avowed their intention to attack Canada, and reports came in that numbers of Irish of doubtful character were leaving New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago, a few armed, others not. The Canadian Government was therefore warned, and at once took most energetic steps. The volunteers along the border were called out at once, and as towards evening it became certain that over 2,000 Fenians were assembling, the Rifle Brigade received orders to start at daybreak on the 25th for St. Johns, to act as a reserve to the Volunteers. The 69th Regt. was ordered from Quebec to Huntingdon, another place expected to be attacked. The Artillery followed.

On the afternoon of the 25th about 300 Fenians, led by O'Neill, crossed the border at St. Armand about 30 miles S.E. of St. Johns and about 60 miles S.E. of Montreal. The Volunteers, 100 strong, were posted on a hill, behind stone fences. The first volley checked the Fenians, and after less than 10 minutes firing they fled, leaving 6 men dead behind them. Their leader O'Neill was meanwhile quietly, and it is believed willingly, captured by the American magistrates. One field piece, a 4 bore was likewise left behind. Although everything promised to terminate well and rapidly, this attempt at a raid has given rise to very strong feelings upon the subject. Although the Canadians have to bear the brunt of it, and are the unfortunate sufferers, it is in reality a purely imperial question and done to avenge Ireland's supposed wrongs. These rumours of an intended raid, besides costing Canada an enormous sum, have for the last three months seriously affected its trade, and lately almost paralysed its large commercial transactions. There is a strong feeling

therefore that urgent representations should be made to the United States Government."

A week later :

MONTREAL, 3rd June, 1870.

" . . . He has thought it desirable to let Prince Arthur make several excursions to the frontier, to visit the volunteers who have been engaged in this last Fenian raid. These men have shown the best possible spirit, and came to the front at once, although it involved a considerable pecuniary loss. The Prince visited the two places where a fight had occurred, viz. at Pigeon's Hill near St. Armand, and at the Front river, near Huntington.

The country people gathered together from miles around to see and welcome the Prince. It was a great day for them. They are mostly Scotch or born here of Scotch parents, and notwithstanding their proximity to the States, they still have a strong feeling of loyalty. Along the roadside, the farmer's wives and daughters stood anxious to offer their welcome with flowers and milk, and they all seemed immensely pleased with the visit : an old Scotch body expressed herself by saying, ' Ai, it warms one's heart to see one of the Queen's sons.' "

Before leaving Canada Elphinstone wrote : " Numerous farewell addresses have been sent to the Prince, and Colonel Elphinstone is doing his best to put as much feeling in the replies as possible, so as not to mar the excellent effects already produced."

Many of these addresses had to be written in French as well as much correspondence. Sir George Cartier, acting Premier, wrote to Elphinstone before the Prince left Canada :

" La visite du Prince a été un *succès complet* dû au tact et l'amabilité et à la gracieusité qui ont distingué partout ses actes et sa conduite. Mais dans ce succès chacun dira avec moi que vous y avez un part. Vous avez contribué à former ce Prince si accompli, et dans le succès de l'illustre Pupille on ne peut oublier celui qui l'a guidé depuis ses premières années. . . . Vous devez être fier de votre *Royal Pupil*. . . . "

Telling of the loyalty encountered, Elphinstone writes :

" To show Your Majesty what good has already been done by the Prince's stay here, Lt.-Colonel Elphinstone cannot do better than mention the following. Sir A. Galt was 6 months ago the leader of a large party who were in favour of ' independence ' "

of Canada. By attempting to advocate it the other day, he lost the whole of his followers and he now stands alone in the House.

. . . The most remarkable thing Colonel Elphinstone has observed throughout this continent ; in Canada as well as the States, even amongst the most radical democratic parties, is the way which Your Majesty's name has become a household word. However strongly opposed to England and all her institutions, there is but one feeling of the highest regard and esteem for Your Majesty. The universality of this feeling, especially in a country like the States, is most remarkable. . . ."

Summing up the tour before leaving Canada, Elphinstone wrote from Lake Memphramagog :

" . . . It has been in every way an immense success. . . . He leaves now, universally esteemed and beloved, . . . The feeling of loyalty has increased throughout the Dominion in an extraordinary degree, and there has grown up with it such a strong personal attachment to the Prince that there appears a general wish that he will soon come again, not as a simple officer of the line, but as Governor-General.

Most sincerely must Your Majesty be congratulated upon this most happy termination of a year's visit to this continent, a visit that has produced such immense good, notwithstanding the strong arguments used to deter Your Majesty from allowing it to take place. . . .

Earnestly does Colonel Elphinstone hope that nothing may occur to mar this feeling, at the same time he greatly fears that the tone of the Home Government may alienate altogether the people, notwithstanding that they are truly loyal at heart. . . .

At the same time it is but fair to let Your Majesty know that this has not been accomplished without considerable labour and anxiety. The endeavour not to raise the jealousies between the two nationalities, but rather to appease them, has been a task of daily labour, and required delicate handling. While the precautions necessary to guard against personal danger to the Prince, more especially during his visit to the States, where more than once his life was apparently threatened, has caused much anxiety and required constant watchfulness. Colonel Elphinstone cannot help confessing that the labour throughout has been very great, and he must admit that he would be glad to obtain rest when he returns to England, as his health has suffered a good deal. He cannot speak sufficiently highly of Mr. Pickard. He has

made himself most useful on every occasion, and proved that his selection was an excellent one. Your Majesty could not leave the Prince in better or safer hands. He is a great favourite with everybody, full of quiet fun, and yet steadier than any one of his age that Colonel Elphinstone knows."

Towards the end of the Prince's visit to Canada, His Royal Highness had been invested with the dignity of the Grand Cross of St. Michael and St. George. As a few years before Elphinstone had written about the Bey of Tunis, he now put in a plea for some honours to be given to Canadians. The suggestion had been strongly urged by Sir John Young, but this time there was a different Prime Minister at Westminster and the recommendation for acknowledgment of services was not adopted. Her Majesty wrote that it was impossible to comply with Sir John's suggestion.

Shortly after arrival back in England, Elphinstone wrote :

BUCKINGHAM PALACE, *28th July*, 1870.

"Lt.-Col. Elphinstone presents his most humble duty to Your Majesty, and begs to offer his most respectful thanks for the decoration of St. Michael and St. George, which Your Majesty has been pleased to confer upon him, and the receipt of which he this day duly acknowledged to the proper authorities.

Your Majesty's signature to the document is the first intimation he has received, that this order was conferred upon him by Your wishes, and as such is the case he gratefully accepts it, as a further mark of Your Majesty's approval of the manner in which he carried on his duties in Canada.

He had previously felt a decided hesitation in accepting it, more especially as he himself had so strongly urged that the various grades of this order should be distributed to others besides the one given to the Prince, and under such circumstances he could not but hesitate to become the only recipient. Sir John Young, however, appears not to have communicated his negative reply—and Lt.-Colonel Elphinstone accepts this order as a gracious mark of Your Majesty's entire approval of his conduct."

CHAPTER XXI : SIX LETTERS

WHEN in the autumn of 1862 Her Majesty wrote to Elphinstone asking him to stay on with Prince Arthur, she spoke of a further period of four years. The autumn of 1866 and the spring of 1867 passed, however, without any word in the correspondence about his leaving. Possibly they discussed the matter verbally ; possibly it was taken for granted that he stayed on. What does not seem to have been mentioned at all was any future date for the termination of his work. That he was preparing the young man to take control of his own affairs and that he himself expected to leave the Prince when the latter came of age is almost certain. In 1868 when the Prince left Woolwich and received his commission Elphinstone had written that his "pupilage may be said to cease. He will now become an officer and far more his own master——" and after praising the young man's behaviour he concludes "most sincerely does Lt.-Col. Elphinstone hope that when his connection with the Prince ceases he may as conscientiously congratulate Your Majesty as he does now !"

That Elphinstone should wish to leave seemed to have come as a complete surprise to Her Majesty. Many of his letters had given her his pledge of service "so long as he can be of any use" and her estimation of his usefulness was evidently different from his own. Some six weeks before the Prince came of age, while they were all at Osborne together, the question arose of Elphinstone leaving and we get a correspondence in which no less than six letters were written to him by the Queen in forty-eight hours, a record surely even for Her Majesty. Possibly Elphinstone was unwell, otherwise it is almost inconceivable that she should not have sent for him and talked over the matter. From her journal we know that she herself spent a normal day of work and driving. The first letter of April 7th has no bearing upon the main subject, and the second is a covering one to the third which ran :

OSBORNE, *April 7th*, 1871.

"The Queen is very anxious now that the time of Prince Arthur's coming of age is so fast approaching again to mention to Col. Elphinstone her and Arthur's *earnest* desire that he should still continue in some manner connected with him and consent to remain for a few years at least at the Head of his Household.

The Queen would not wish to bind or tie down Col. Elphinstone after eleven years of such most anxious watching—the results of which have been so successful—or to oblige him to attend more on Arthur than is agreeable to the Colonel or useful. But Arthur feels as strongly as she does (though he is too young to estimate the great necessity as the Queen can) the great loss and misfortune it was to Prince Alfred to have *no one* of *any* experience and weight about him at the most critical time of his life whom he could turn to for fatherly advice and assistance, and therefore wishes much to keep his kind and valued friend near him, a wish which *all* who know both the Colonel and Arthur must most earnestly join in.

The Prince of Wales has in fact suffered greatly from the same want—after General Bruce's death.

The Queen therefore urges her wish most earnestly on Col. Elphinstone."

She wrote also to Prince Arthur, telling him of the letter she had just sent to Elphinstone. Writing also on April 7th from Osborne, Elphinstone in a long letter thanking the Queen for her wish that he would stay with the Prince and reviewing the past, tells her bluntly that it would not be possible for him to do so "without—what he feels sure you would not wish him to propose—viz. to sacrifice his future prospects in his own Corps."

The same day came the reply :

"The Queen thanks Col. Elphinstone for his letter just received which she will not attempt to conceal from him is a bitter disappointment to her.

Still she will not repeat her wish after what the Colonel has said. But she does hope that he will be able to stop for the first five or six months with Prince Arthur to superintend his first start and to give him good advice. This will enable us to look about and to try and find some superior and trustworthy person to take charge of Prince Arthur's affairs and who can be a real help to him."

Still the same day Elphinstone answers—and in this second letter we see what was probably the main reason for his refusal—while deeply regretting that Her Majesty had not liked his reply, "His firm impression is that the proposed arrangement would be decidedly irksome to the Prince, and that after a very short time the Prince would be delighted to dissolve it." But he agreed to stay for a few months to do his utmost to start him fairly.

The next day Her Majesty wrote :

OSBORNE, *April 8th, 1871.*

"The Queen is sorry that Col. Elphinstone should be pained at her disappointment, but it is only a proof of the value which she sets on his advice and assistance, which makes her so deeply regret that he feels unable to accede for a very few years to Arthur's and her wishes. For she has suffered so much from the conduct of Prince Alfred and from the total want of any true friend to him that she naturally trembles for Arthur. While the Queen does not wish on any account to press Col. Elphinstone further than she has already done, perhaps it would be best for her to leave the discussion for a few days, giving him time to reflect, and he could either write or come down to the Queen to talk over further arrangements. Col. Elphinstone knows how grateful she feels to him for all his kind and unremitting care to Arthur for these twelve and a half years. The Queen wishes to *repeat* she did not *wish* more than a connection between him and Prince Arthur with as little work and attention as he liked, and perhaps some means might still be found to affect this by some honorary title which would not prevent him returning to his profession."

The matter had now been discussed with Sir Thomas Biddulph, and a compromise was reached—Elphinstone agreed to stay for a year. His changed outlook was perhaps due to the Prince who "spoke with an earnestness that Col. Elphinstone did not expect and from the manner fully convinced him that he really wished him to remain. He himself hopes and trusts that his stay with the Prince may prove as useful as your Majesty expects . . ." By the time the year was over a working solution had been evolved and no further word of his leaving is ever mentioned. Elphinstone no longer remained entirely with Prince Arthur but continued to do the work of Treasurer and Comptroller of his Household, and two years later he was appointed to command the R.E. troops at Aldershot. Here he spent the next fourteen years soldiering as well as doing work for the Prince and Queen, thus taking on two full-time jobs ; a source at times of considerable difficulty to himself and others.

Though able to go back to his corps and eventually to become a Major-General, there is no doubt that he sacrificed success in his own career to his work at Court, for he lost many years of seniority, remaining from 1868 to 1887 in the ranks of Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel, Lieutenant-Colonel and Colonel, and during

the years at Aldershot fully employed and never on half pay, while his contemporaries and juniors climbed the tree of promotion above him. This was hardly due to unsuitability or inefficiency, for in the weeks when his future with the Prince was still uncertain Lord Granville writes to the Queen asking if she would approve "The Military attachéship at Vienna being offered to Col. Elphinstone who would seem to be admirably adapted for it"; at the foot of this letter is a line from Her Majesty saying that Col. Elphinstone was staying on with the Prince. His seniors and juniors spoke always with praise of his work both at Aldershot and later as Major-General.

The Queen however wished her thanks to take a practical form, and on July 4th her Majesty wrote to Elphinstone:

"It was a great pleasure to the Queen to mark publicly her deep sense of the very valuable and devoted service which *Sir Howard Elphinstone* has rendered to her beloved son Arthur, and thereby to herself. Though the dear boy's naturally sweet and amiable disposition will have rendered his task less irksome than it might otherwise have been, the great responsibility of Sir Howard's position, particularly in distant parts—like in Canada—as well as his almost constant presence with Arthur, must have been very trying to him and has, the Queen fears, told upon his health.

Till now indeed he may look with pride and satisfaction on his young charge's success and with God's blessing she trusts this will ever be the case."

Elphinstone wrote thanking her for the "consideration and for the immense confidence that your Majesty has at all times placed in him. This has rendered his task far easier and he is most grateful to Your Majesty for it." He also thanked her for the very gracious way she had thus publicly marked her approval "of the manner in which he has terminated his labours for he considers these now at an end; as he can in future only act as 'the adviser' and the friend, not as the authorised guide or monitor. Everything has worked so smoothly however and Prince Arthur has so real a liking for him apparently that he does not fear the future in the least . . ."

♦

CHAPTER XXII : ACCIDENT

ON May 1st, 1871, the Prince came of age and on May 12th Elphinstone wrote "Prince Arthur has already been told to write to Your Majesty once a week and Colonel Elphinstone will not omit to instruct Mr. Pickard to write once a week as soon as he himself leaves."

If Elphinstone thought that his duty of letter writing would now be over he was soon disillusioned. A bare three weeks passed and then in the Queen's words "*Arthur is so unlucky!*"—Fate stepped in and tripped up the young man and there was another period of daily and twice-daily writing. "*Really he is always getting into trouble when Sir Howard is not by!*" is one of Her Majesty's ejaculations. In this case Sir Howard was at hand, but not quite close enough to save trouble.

On May 19th in anticipation of a court ball Prince Arthur dined quietly at Buckingham Palace with Prince Christian and their gentlemen and after dinner they went into the billiard-room which adjoins the Equerries' room and the Grand Hall. The evening was warm and the windows which descend to the floor were wide open, the lower part being guarded by a slight wire gauze, unable to bear much pressure. Prince Arthur while speaking leant against the gauze, which suddenly gave way and threw him backwards into the Courtyard. The height of the window is about 7 or 8 foot and the ground below hard stone. He was completely stunned for the first minute and unable to walk back without the support of two policemen.

We are more accustomed these days to folk descending upon us from the air, but it must have been a shock to the policemen on duty to receive a Prince unexpectedly upon their helmets. Then followed a chaotic few minutes. The Prince had taken the only short way from the billiard-room to the courtyard and it seemed interminable before he was joined by his anxious companions hurrying to him along different routes. By the time they arrived, the place, so quiet a few moments earlier, was filled with confusion. Carriages with guests for the ball had streamed in through the far archway filling the place with the noise of rumbling wheels, horses stamping, harness jingling and carriage doors opening and slamming. Surprised faces peered out above billows of satin and lace and the plumes of cocked hats fluttered as their owners got up stiffly from cramped positions and wondered what

was the group of agitated people by the side door. Though Elphinstone was relieved for the moment to see that the Prince could walk—shortly before this one of the men at Woolwich had had a rather similar fall and been picked up dead—yet the Prince's flushed face and violent trembling was alarming and the doctors pronounced him to have severe concussion. Naturally no nurse was allowed inside the Palace walls and the faithful Collins with Pickard and Elphinstone took up their duty watching and nursing. So letter writing became again part of the daily routine, to the Queen and also to the anxious relations at home and abroad. From Balmoral the next day came the following :

BALMORAL, May 21, 1871.

“The Queen cannot sufficiently thank Colonel Elphinstone for his kind letter and full details and for his carefully worded telegram which prevented her being as greatly shocked and alarmed as she would otherwise have been, though of course the thought of what it *was* and what it might have been has filled the Queen when she gradually learnt the truth with horror and gratitude to God ! The Queen can hardly imagine *what* the kind and devoted Colonel must have felt and indeed Prince Christian and *all* on seeing darling Arthur vanish and even now the Queen can hardly dare to think of it. It causes her to shudder. *Everyone* feels the deepest interest in him and the Queen's thoughts are constantly with him. That her precious child's life was spared appears to her *quite* providential. What did Colonel Elphinstone and the others think ? How did they get to him—which way was he brought in—and were people already arriving for the ball ?

Suffering as the poor child so often does with his head—the Queen fears he will feel this *long*, and this is the third fall he has had since the beginning of *January* ! He is heedless the Colonel must know, and we all pray this may make him *more careful*.

The Queen did not write to him as she thinks he ought not to attempt to read—but the Queen hopes that Colonel Elphinstone will say everything most kind and affectionate and loving from her to him. The Queen entreats Colonel Elphinstone not to overtire himself—by watching, and to take air and rest. She knows how kindly he and Mr. Pickard and Collins will nurse him and she is certain Willie Thomson will be most willing and ready to help.”

The three men with the help of Willie Thomson did their best as nurses, though Mr. Pickard collapsed with bronchitis after four days and needed nursing himself. Complete quiet was ordered.

The invalid diet of meat and wine having been rejected by the Prince in quite unmistakable manner, he lay for some days indifferent to all things. It was a week before "he himself originated a laugh." The Queen sent telegrams as to the temperature of his room; the Princess of Wales lent her "carrying chair" from Marlborough House and presently after Prince Arthur had been allowed into the summer-house in the garden, came with her small pony carriage and took him for a drive. Then arose the problem of convalescence. There were several alternatives, Balmoral, Frogmore the home of Princess Christian, or seaside lodgings again. His mother wished the Prince to join her in Scotland.

She wrote a week later :

BALMORAL, *May 27, 1871.*

"The Queen thanks Colonel Elphinstone for his kind letter and tender care of her beloved child. She has not time to write more fully but wishes just to say that she is a little fearful of the visit to Frogmore for the following reasons; Princess Helena being an invalid open windows and draughts will have to be so much avoided that she fears Arthur will *not* get that *air* and coolness which is absolutely necessary. If, however, Colonel Elphinstone could go with him and watch over this and see also that Dr. Ellison sees him daily and is put in communication with Sir William Jenner and Mr. Paget, the Queen would feel easy and not object. Pray telegraph your answer——"

When Elphinstone stooped to cajolment as he sometimes did, it was for the sake of the young man. The journey to Scotland and the Spartan air of Balmoral were the last things for which the Prince wished at this moment, and Elphinstone's letter of nearly 1,000 words that sped northward in his place was the essence of tact. He could thoroughly understand Her Majesty's objections to Frogmore, but what was to be done? The doctors forbade the long train journey. Windsor had the great advantage of numerous shady walks, drives and seats. He need never be in the sun, which would not be the case either at Dover or Brighton. Besides, at these latter places he was bound to be mobbed by people which he (and also of course Her Majesty) much disliked. At Windsor doctors who knew him would be at hand. His own rooms could be kept cool without any difficulty; and then in the letter Elphinstone returns again to the subject of those lovely shady walks and stresses the quiet of the grass drives to Virginia Water

and the peaceful hours that could be spent fishing. Yet after the episode of the yachting at Dover he was inclined to circumnavigate Sir W. Jenner on matters dealing with convalescence ; and Prince Christian writing from Frogmore to assure him that he would be most welcome there when he accompanied Prince Arthur said : " You can always rely upon me to back you up against ' old Willy ' as he is terribly afraid of me."

It is interesting to see Her Majesty's opinion of Windsor Park.

" She is very glad that Frogmore was so successful and she can easily understand that the Park which she herself thinks rather tiresome, was soothing with the absence of stony roads and pavements."

The Queen's adjective of tiresome seems inappropriate to Windsor Park. Towards the end of May there are surely few places more lovely, when the different trees are still every shade of spring green and gold and the bluebells lie at their feet like mountain lakes ; when the distant views are misty with spring haze and against the blue Buckinghamshire hills Windsor Castle shines softly like a jewel of clustered pearls. The weather at this time was warm ; in the little open mail phaeton they could " entirely avoid the rattling noise of the hard roads " ; they drove instead over the springing turf studded with wild strawberry flowers and where the stiff bracken shoots were starting to uncurl. The reflection in the lakes was broken only by ripples of rising fish and then followed peaceful if ineffectual hours upon the water. Quiet sport for the Prince ; pencil and colours for Elphinstone ; and all around them one of the most beautiful spots in the world at the most beautiful time of the year.

CHAPTER XXIII : THE RÔLE OF INTERMEDIARY

ON Prince Arthur's coming of age Elphinstone's work was in fact far from being finished ; in one direction the most important part lay still in the future. On reaching the age of 21 the young man naturally felt he should have some independence, some amusement and novelty and also the liberty of making his own friends ; during the next few years this correspondence

shows traces of minor misunderstandings that might easily have led to an estrangement such as existed between Her Majesty and her two elder sons had matters been less tactfully handled.

The early 1870's was a difficult period for Queen Victoria, and in consequence also for her children and entourage. She was very far from well and often in considerable pain, and might with justice plead the privileges of an invalid; the Prince of Wales's illness in December 1871 had brought her acute anxiety; in the Franco-Prussian War her two eldest sons-in-law, as well as many of her relations, were involved; added to these difficulties there now came a long spell of office for the Liberal party with Mr. Gladstone as Prime Minister. To some people there are few things more exhausting than having to deal with an uncongenial personality, and Her Majesty made no pretence of caring for Mr. Gladstone; it was perhaps the unconscious reaction from the strain of pain, anxiety and suppressed irritation that made her turn to her sons in a mood of criticism, and write to them what the Prince of Wales described as "Jobations."

The faults that she finds with her third son are those of manner and not of matter; nevertheless she was at times considerably annoyed with him, and all Elphinstone's powers of soothing explanation on the one hand and tactful remonstrance on the other were needed to reduce the mountains back to their original molehills. The foundation upon which he worked, the only possible one for success, was affection. He wrote that "he is too fond of Prince Arthur and has his welfare too much at heart to consider any exertions for his benefit in the light of labour." With genuine friendship existing between the two men, it was possible for the Prince to accept criticism or guidance without the resentment which would otherwise have been inevitable. Even so the position held difficulties. During the Prince of Wales's illness in December 1871 Her Majesty wrote an admonitory letter to Prince Arthur on the subject of good manners. She did not like his answer to what she herself described as "a long lecture."

WINDSOR CASTLE, *Jan. 4, 1872.*

"The Queen sends Sir Howard Elphinstone the two letters she received from Arthur as she wishes to call his attention to several things in them, and to ask him whether she should take any notice of them, or not. In the 1st which is very kind, she is distressed to see him harping upon the story of *her* appearing MORE!! Surely the *long sufferings* she went through and which have left traces not

easily to be effaced and not at all yet effaced, as she can neither walk or stand as she used to do, and suffers constantly from rheumatism and stiffness and pain in her right arm and hands. If her own children *echo* these foolish things she will have more to suffer than before.

In the 2nd letter he is evidently rather annoyed and perhaps a little offended at her long lecture, but she tried to put it as mildly as she could, but she thinks a *boy* of 21 ought not to put his *feelings* against the experience of his mother, 34 years on the Throne, and who surely never would urge him to do anything which could be otherwise than for his good.

It would be much easier to let children go on doing what would inevitably injure them, as we have seen in the case of his 2 elder brothers in very different ways, than to *warn* them kindly, and perhaps not receive always a gracious answer for it. What would Sir Howard suggest the Queen doing? Take *no* notice whatsoever or write something in answer, or would Sir Howard mention it to Arthur that the Queen had observed to *him* upon the two letters?

The Queen has just read the two letters carefully over again and she must say that with the exception of that one expression she thinks it is a *proper* letter and shows a readiness to listen to advice, but the 1st is very unfortunate and he *must* be set right upon that point of her appearing (having appeared more in 71 than she had ever done since 61) or she will inevitably get ill again."

Elphinstone's reply shows in what manner he acted between mother and son :

GUILDFORD BATTERY, DOVER,

5 Jan. 1872.

"Sir Howard Elphinstone presents his most humble duty and begs to return herewith the two letters of Prince Arthur's which your Majesty graciously forwarded to him. He certainly would have preferred a different tone and would have been glad if Prince Arthur had adopted in his replies expressions less calculated to displease than the ones he has used. Nevertheless he trusts Your Majesty will make due allowance for a boy of his age. One is then too apt to think and speak of matters in an abstract way quite regardless of their applicability and he feels quite certain that Prince Arthur penned his letter with the kindest possible intention and that any expression or sentiments he used about Your Majesty 'doing more' were simply the result of his newspaper reading.

Sir Howard Elphinstone therefore fully coincides with Your Majesty in thinking that it would be better not to write to Prince Arthur on the subject. He will speak to the Prince in a quiet way, so as not to come direct from Your Majesty on the subject."

This letter had the effect of turning her criticism of Prince Arthur's manners towards the subject of his clothes.

"Nothing could be nicer than Prince Arthur is now . . ." but ". . . she has spoken strongly about the parting of the hair, which he *really* must give up when he goes abroad, and the frightful *stickups*. . . ."

Sometimes her criticisms take a tone almost of apology, rather as if she felt that Elphinstone might consider the faults she points out as his own.

". . . The Queen hopes Sir Howard Elphinstone will not be vexed at what she has said about dear Arthur, whose worth she knows how to estimate. . . ."

". . . She is sorry to say anything to distress Sir Howard who takes such kind pains, but she is obliged to tell him the truth."

". . . Sir Howard must excuse the Queen's expressions. . . ."

Her own words in that memorandum of 1858 give us the probable cause for her anxiety :

"It gives me a pang if any fault is found in his looks and character, and the bare thought of his growing out of my hands and being exposed to danger—makes the tears come to my eyes."

She now wrote :

"Alas ! she feels more and more *how* her children become strangers to her and no longer seem to fit in with her ways and habits (which she thinks are simple and good) when they once go out a great deal into Society. She grieves over it. . . ."

It was only manners which were criticised, not conduct ; and though Elphinstone is "afraid that he cannot but fully co-incide with the remarks You have made" he finds

"there is a change but he hopes and believes it is but a temporary change which has not taken root and which with many other things will pass off gradually if not quite as rapidly as it has come on. . . . Not unlikely he is unconsciously imitating some of his brother officers or some other people with whom he has lately associated

and that this change of manner will likewise disappear with the change of companions.

At heart Prince Arthur is precisely the same and he would not knowingly do an unkind act to others. Your Majesty will no doubt find that in the course of another month a good deal of this roughness and conceit of manner will again have sobered down. Sir Howard Elphinstone is very grateful You mentioned it, as he will see—in a quiet way—what he can do to counteract it.”

Later she wrote :

“ The Queen cannot deny that her good Arthur causes her some anxiety as she thinks he is wanting in reflection and stability of purpose.

These are no doubt *some* of the many defects of youth but *still* they are dangerous in his position.”

Elphinstone replied :

“ . . . He must beg of Your Majesty to have patience, for he feels sure that the Prince’s former manner will come back, and that this is simply the idea of a youth who has suddenly obtained liberty and presumed too much in consequence, a case in which gentle checking only can be of lasting benefit. He trusts Your Majesty will therefore graciously have patience.”

The Queen answered :

“ As regards *reserve*, there cannot be *too* much of it *towards people IN Society* ; *there* is the great danger of familiarity, and the Queen does think it a misfortune that by going out so much, *so many* acquaintances are made.

But reserve is *not* necessary towards the *faithful devoted confidential* servants who have known him from his childhood, especially when it did not exist before. *That would* be out of place. But there is *one more* thing to be borne in mind, which she has not before mentioned, viz. : that if any of the Queen’s sons *put* on a *tone* of *stiffness* in her presence *towards her* people when *she* does *not* do so, it is as if they *meant* to *show their mother and the Queen* that *they* disapproved HER MANNER. Sir Howard will *see* the force of this. She has always striven by *her* example both of openness and reserve, towards different people to show her children what *she thinks right*, and which she thinks an experience of 35 years and $\frac{1}{2}$ may entitle her to.”

Later there came some letters of 1,000 words or so on this question of manners: "simple little acts of courtesy and kindness—such as after a long absence—a shake of the hand, and above *all at all* times by a friendly nod or an exchange of a few words on meeting in the house etc. The Queen knows how *this* is appreciated by *all*, even from the *Ladies* and *Gentlemen*, and how much more so from her own Children. She herself would always do it to the people in the house of *anyone* she knew. Prince Alfred unfortunately omits this to *all* high and low, and it makes him *very unpopular*, though it may possibly NOT be *meant* to offend. But people who only can see and know Princes by their *outward* acts have no other opportunity of judging them except when they see them at such moments and form *no* good opinion of them.

It costs you *so* little, to be *friendly* and *kind* and it makes you so *beloved* and gives *so much* pleasure. Therefore the Queen is *so* anxious that Arthur should not neglect this. The Prince of Wales is always very kind and is always much beloved. . . .

This is a long story and very badly written but the Queen has a headache and wished to write this in time. People in Scotland will be greatly pleased to see the *Duke* of Strathearn,¹ and while he is here the two titles should *frequently* be mentioned.

The Queen generally directs to him *with both* as it was frequently done to her father. . . . In closing this very long and she fears very *illwritten* letter she feels she has omitted *one thing* with reference to Highlanders and that is the total absence of presumption or *taking* advantage of the *tone* and *footing* of equality with which they are *constantly* treated by their superiors and masters. They never think of that but the reverse. They are independent and free—and will say what they think pretty freely and even roughly, without flattery, but have a higher sense of *real* respect, and of what is gentlemanlike, than the *most* overpolished English servant.

On the other hand they feel acutely and even *resent want* of FRIENDLINESS, and what they call 'freedom of manner and openness.' This makes them very valuable *as* servants. But young men and especially officers don't always understand and appreciate this, and sometimes carry into private life the tone they *must* often employ to the soldiers under them, which is not right or liked. . . . The Queen will write to Arthur to-night. The Queen wishes Prince Arthur would not encourage Polo. It is really *cruel*."

¹ Prince Arthur had recently been created Duke of Connaught and Strathearn.

Apart from his military work for a time there seemed to be few things that Prince Arthur could do that were not criticised by his mother. Hunting was dangerous.

"Pray do try and prevent that overdone (for his body and mind) hunting."

Smoking indoors had been frowned upon earlier. Yachting was risky both in itself and in the people encountered at regattas.

"She fears it is a sad useless life," she writes, and again from Osborne, speaking on the subject she says :

"She would regret his being *here* during the regatta week as the *very worst* people come here then. . . ."

The theatre also held danger :

" . . . There is another subject which the Queen wished just to mention, and that is that she hopes and trusts Arthur, who goes often to the theatre *never* goes *behind* the scenes. . . ."

Between the Prince of Wales and Elphinstone there existed a sincere regard. There might easily have been friction. A nature less generous than the Prince's would surely have resented his mother's outspoken preference for the younger brother. Not one trace of jealousy is shown by the elder Prince, but many evidences of affection. During the early days at Windsor there were frequent notes written by him to Elphinstone—not on matters of importance but all of them in pleasant friendly terms, planning to show the boy the damming of a trout stream, offering his box at the theatre for a pantomime, arranging for his younger brother to see over the Observatory at Cambridge, etc. He wrote also to Prince Arthur a letter of advice, telling him he could always rely upon his elder brother to help him in any difficulty, and adding : "ask Major if this is not so." Elphinstone received from the Prince an occasional friendly letter ; and then in the spring of 1872 we find the former writing unwillingly to the Queen's eldest son by command of Her Majesty.

On the 27th of February the Queen drove in state to St. Paul's Cathedral to attend the thanksgiving service for the recovery of the Prince of Wales from typhoid. She wrote to Elphinstone :

"She is not feeling strong *or equal* to the *dreadful* day of Tuesday though she is anxious to show her sense of the loyalty and sympathy shown by her people on the late occasion.

She is most anxious that Sir Howard should go with us in the carriage procession."

Two days afterwards she drove with Prince Arthur and Prince Leopold round the Park in the afternoon; on her return as they stopped at the garden gate on Constitution Hill a Fenian, Arthur O'Connor, came to the carriage door and pointed a pistol at her. John Brown managed to catch hold of the young man and Prince Arthur jumped over the side of the carriage and helped in the struggle. Brown was afterwards given a gold medal and twenty-five pounds for his timely work, and Prince Arthur was presented with a tie-pin in memory of the occasion. The Prince of Wales who was then in Rome, evidently thought that not enough notice had been taken of Prince Arthur's share in the episode. Her Majesty's annoyance is clear.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE,

March 14, 1872.

"... The Queen was almost *sure* that *so* absurd an idea could not have entered dear Arthur's head, but this extraordinary observation in the letter she encloses (all of which Sir Howard Elphinstone can see as he knows all) while it annoyed her, startled her for *fear* the idea had been put into Arthur's head.

... She sends a note for Sir Howard and the draft of the answer which she has *not yet* sent. But she thinks a few words from Sir Howard Elphinstone to the Prince of Wales (who she *knows likes* to hear from Sir Howard sometimes) saying *he had heard* the Prince of Wales had said something of the kind to the Queen, would do *more* good *even* than what *she proposes* to write. Would Sir Howard Elphinstone return the letter as soon as possible.

She is feeling tired and very *glad* to get away."

Unfortunately Elphinstone's reply is not among his other letters; it would have been interesting to know how he tried to escape from this difficult job. To have written to the Prince of Wales in a few short words all that the Queen felt upon this matter might well have daunted the bravest person. Her commands were not to be evaded for:

"... While she entirely agrees in what he says as to the force and facility of explaining things better verbally than by writing, she thinks a *few short* words in the *sense* of the Queen's letter to the Prince of Wales which (with a few alterations) went yesterday, would be most useful and better written AT ONCE. Sir Howard

Elphinstone could just write a few lines inquiring after the Prince of Wales's health, then saying he thought he would like to hear about Prince Arthur's lecture, and then just touching upon the other subject saying he had incidentally heard that the Prince of Wales had thought Prince Arthur should have been also rewarded and more have been said about him in the papers, and that he wished to correct the idea, which did not exist in Arthur's mind, nor she believes in anyone else's, which could *not be*; that one could praise and reward our (undecipherable) the more so while she could *not* do, for his very position, what Brown *did*, who was deservedly rewarded for his presence of mind, and devotion. This done *at once* would prevent any recurrence of arguments. And could be *quite* short and incidentally brought in.

Arthur was *very* amiable and wore his pin *continuously* and repeatedly said *how much* he liked it."

Elphinstone managed to obey the Queen, and yet give no offence; for a reply came from Rome in which the Prince of Wales said:

"It gave me the greatest pleasure to receive your letter."

Upon the subject of racing, to her eldest son she wrote direct; to Prince Arthur she wrote through Elphinstone, and she slipped into the pitfall that lies in wait for us all in middle age—that of considering that when the younger generation have ideas different from our own, they must of necessity be wrong. She wrote:

"She wishes he had *not* gone to the Derby *with Alfred*. At least she hopes it will not be made a regular thing. It is *considered* the *worst place of all*."

A week later on June 8th, 1872, the Ascot races are the subject of her letter.

"... It is deeply regretted by *all* that *Ascot* should be *visited* THIS year by the Prince of Wales, and the Queen *has* done ALL she can to prevent it, but in vain. The awful lesson of November and December *seems already* forgotten!! It is not because the Queen thinks (and the Prince ¹ still more) races the dullest things in the world, that she is so *anxious* that the Prince of Wales, and if he won't, that *Prince Arthur* should *discountenance* them *as much as possible* but on account of the horrible gambling, the *ruin* to hundreds of families and the heart breaking of Parents, caused thereby which lowers the higher classes *frightfully*.

¹ The Prince Consort.

The feeling is very strong *about it* amongst the *best* and not *only* the very strict people.

Now, what the Queen has *strongly urged* upon the Prince of Wales *is*, to go *only* on *Tuesday* and *Thursday*, the days on which the late King and Queen Adelaide *went*, and *not* on Wednesday and Friday when *none* but the fashionable bad set and betting people go, and not the public at large.

We even latterly gave up Tuesday and only went on Thursday.

But if Prince Arthur *whatever* the Prince of Wales may *wish to do*, *refuses* to go on the other days (if he stays so long) and rides over to Windsor to see his sister and to ride in the Park or to look after Bagshot, he would be doing a *real national* good, which as he stands high in the eyes of the Country, will be of *use* to the *Prince of Wales*.

He should absolutely BREAK with what does the higher classes such harm. Let him try to persuade the Prince of Wales (if he has not as the Queen hopes he has, already given up the idea of going on Wednesday and Friday) from going to Ascot except on *Tuesday* and THURSDAY.

Pray telegraph an answer as the Queen worries herself much about these things."

Though it was within Elphinstone's powers to calm Her Majesty by letter or by speech, yet surely to do the same by telegram cannot have been easy. To this subject of racing the Queen returned again and again, particularly when the dreaded Ascot week drew near. Elphinstone could use what arguments he pleased, and he could report that Prince Arthur had no intention of betting or becoming involved with the fast racing world, yet her worried letters continued. Writing from Balmoral she says :

June 11, 1873.

"... It is no doubt just what Sir Howard says, viz. : that he does things because *other* young men do it. But is that not the *whole* question? Is not that *the one* thing which *ruins* young men, and which everyone and especially a *Prince* should be *strengthened* to resist and set at defiance? *Most* of evil done in the world arises from the wish to do as others do and *not* to be laughed at.

She feels *very anxious* about it for the *future*. The Prince of Wales is wrong as to example being of *no* use. What can be done? It is a constant worry to the Queen.

She is so done up with the enormous amount of writing she has to do on account of the family that she is quite exhausted by it and cannot write more."

In spite of this letter having reached already several hundred words, she continues in friendly tone

"How is Sir Howard himself?"

After four cold days last week we have great heat since Sunday—but the evenings were quite cool with cold nights but to-night it is very hot. Splendid weather and the country *most* beautiful, but the drought is *quite alarming*."

A year or two later comes a final ejaculation on this question :

"She is really greatly alarmed at the Prince of Wales' passion for racing. He goes everywhere in search of them and the Queen hears to her horror, loses a good deal of money. How will that end and what an example!"

Yet could Her Majesty have lived till the year 1909 she might have revised her opinion on racing. For when the Prince of Wales as King Edward VII won the Derby with his horse *Minoru* there was not only a wild demonstration on the race-course, but an outburst of congratulation and joy from the whole nation.

CHAPTER XXIV : EUROPEAN SEARCH

FROM 1873 to 1881 Elphinstone was stationed at Aldershot commanding R.E. troops and companies ; yet his quarters were often empty, and one feels that his juniors at the North Camp must have been very capable and his seniors very accommodating ; for the addresses from which his letters were posted at one time or another during these years show that his work with the Prince was no sinecure ; coronations, funerals, and marriages of royalties, manœuvres or inspections sent Prince Arthur from north to south and east to west of Europe and on almost every occasion Elphinstone went in attendance.

Early in 1870 it was planned that that autumn the Prince should go to Prussia for the army manœuvres, and even as late

as August the 9th Her Majesty writes to Elphinstone about arrangements for the visit to Germany. Bismarck, however had different ideas and more than a year passed before a peaceful visit was possible. Writing on August 4th, 1870, shortly after Prince Arthur's return from Canada and when Her Majesty expected him to travel to Berlin almost immediately, she mentioned to Elphinstone the subject of foreign marriages :

" . . . God knows ! this frightful ' War ' and the utter *uselessness* as regards National interests or Assistance to one's *own*, of these alliances, certainly confirms *all* the Queen's feelings and views on this subject. The Queen is in a terrible position of anxiety personal and public and feels *HOW* at *this moment* above all others or even still more before it had come to pass, that the beloved Prince's wisdom and great knowledge of the 2 nations would have been of inestimable use.

He could write and explain what the Queen for many reasons cannot and *yet* she thanks God ! he is spared the fearful position he would have been placed in now.

Dear Arthur is very helpful and most dear and kind and a great comfort at the present moment.

The Queen hopes to hear occasionally from Colonel Elphinstone and that he will get quite strong and well.

. P.S. The Queen thanks Colonel Elphinstone for his two letters. It was certainly her idea and her wish to give Colonel Elphinstone the C. of St. Michael and St. George as the mark of her approval and of his conduct during the stay in Canada. . . .

. . . P.S. Be sure and take a Gotha Almanac with you."

This last sentence gave a clue to the object of the coming journey ; there was an ulterior motive to this travelling. It was felt that the Prince should have a chance of meeting various princesses at Protestant courts. The Queen seemed to know off hand the relationship of every Grand Duchess and Princess all over the Continent and was never at a loss over the age and name of some great niece of one Empress or the eligibility of the granddaughter of another. The complicated family trees were perfectly plain to her ; she expected a like knowledge from those around her and study of the intricacies of royal relationships became one of Elphinstone's duties.

In November 1871 came the following letter from Scotland ; the Queen had been ill and in great pain from abscesses during the autumn.

BALMORAL, *Nov. 2nd 1871.*

"The Queen thanks Sir Howard Elphinstone for his kind letter and is glad to be able to say that she is getting on very well and steadily now, ever since the 17th October, though not able to take walking exercise out of doors, but she walks up and down stairs with support *now*, and her sleep and appetite are very good, stiff and ailing she is however still.

Dear Arthur's success out deer stalking was a pleasure and surprise to us all, and a *great* satisfaction to himself, but there were *too* many *Princes* here *at once*.

The Queen has allowed Prince Arthur to go abroad for a month early in January, when he wishes to go to Berlin, Gotha and Darmstadt. She told him that she wished Sir Howard to go with him and that she would tell Sir Howard so; for this was his first visit to Foreign Courts and it was of the greatest importance that someone of experience should be with him to prevent any mistakes, which otherwise might be serious, so much tact being necessary, abroad.

The Queen hopes Sir Howard is well? He will have grieved for his gallant and distinguished old Chief, Sir John Burgoyne, who has left his widow and family unfortunately very ill off."

Elphinstone in his reply says, "So far as Sir Howard Elphinstone is concerned he is quite ready to obey Your Majesty's wishes. His own impression however is that Prince Arthur would prefer instead to have his two equerries with him. This is a matter however which may be left open until the last moment . . ." The Queen gained her point and shortly afterwards she wrote she was glad to see that Sir Howard realised the necessity of going with Prince Arthur. From now onwards the tempo of Elphinstone's life is changed. The stationary years of Greenwich give way to continual travel and for the rest of his life he hardly stayed in the same place for more than a few days at a time.

Early in January 1872 they set forth on this visit to Berlin, the first of many; Elphinstone in the background as guide and councillor armed with a well-thumbed volume of the *Almanach de Gotha* and also a calf-bound dictionary that held the key to Her Majesty's cypher—a dictionary not often used as an inspiration for spelling—receiving as they went endless instructions by letter and telegram from Her Majesty. One of these, "Pray telegraph whenever you arrive *anywhere*," was dutifully obeyed;

some of the others were perhaps judiciously forgotten. Just before this visit to Berlin Her Majesty writes from Osborne :

“ Prince Arthur should be guided as to civilities, etc. by the Crown Prince and Princess, and better do *too much* rather than *too little*, but that she is *most* anxious that Sir Howard should rest himself (as she grieves to hear he is again not well) and *confine his* attention (unless he feels able to do so) to advice and guidance.

What the Queen would wish to mention to Sir Howard is that Prince Arthur may and in fact *should try and look* at *several Princesses*. One there is who Princess Alice and the Crown Princess speak *very* highly of . . . (Then follows a long list of names, mostly German.)

. . . All these Princesses it is well to observe may be equally said to be candidates for Prince Alfred, as he is by no means *sure* of obtaining the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia, on which however he is quite bent.

The Queen does not wish to mention *all* these to Prince Arthur for fear of alarming him, but it is well he should look about, else these Princesses may get snapped up. There may be other nice ones, daughters of Mediatised Princes, who however would do equally well, who the Queen does not know about. . . .”

Elphinstone answers assuring the Queen that the “ minutest punctilios shall be observed in the way of civilities.” The question of princesses was one to which he had evidently given thought already :

“ He is very glad that Your Majesty has mentioned the subject of seeing various Princesses ; he himself certainly intended doing so and thought this an opportunity not to be missed. The Princesses which Your Majesty mentions are all down on his private list. . . .”

This was Elphinstone’s first sight of Prussian society. Later he was to know it well, though further knowledge did not bring with it any increased appreciation. From Berlin he writes :

“ Fortunately the hours here are very early so that there is not much fatigue attending to this kind of life. Everybody dines at 5, and the theatres are over by 9 p.m. On the 27th a dance is to be given to which every possible Princess that can be got has been asked and Prince Arthur will therefore

have an opportunity of seeing them. Sir Howard Elphinstone however thinks that there is no chance at present of his falling in love. . . . Yesterday they attended the circus which appears to be a favourite place of resort. Prince Arthur appears everywhere in uniform and this has produced a most favourable effect. He is a great favourite with the King and is getting more and more popular with the Prussian officers. In fact everything is done to create through his visit a favourable impression for England. . . .”

Elphinstone took the opportunity of speaking to the Crown Princess “to see what could be done to let Prince Arthur see some eligible Princesses. As it unfortunately happens there are very few here at present. . . . The Princess Royal intends however to see what she can do to bring several together. . . . She invited some young girls to tea and Sir Howard was asked to come in and look at some of the paintings in the room, so that no suspicion of the object of the visit should get about. . . .” The day before leaving Berlin Elphinstone wrote, “To-day Prince Arthur pays his fairwell (*sic*) visits and there is no doubt that he has made a favourable impression everywhere. Everybody speaks in his praise, even Prince Frederick Charles who is generally hostile to everything English. In society he has created quite a sensation by his charming manners . . . and so far as increasing the ‘entente cordiale’ between Germany and England, Prince Arthur has not only done his best but moreover has been most successful. Major Pickard has been of great use as he is very observant as to the peculiarities of German etiquette . . .”

From Berlin they went to stay with the Queen’s second daughter. Photographs of this period bear record of carefree days spent at Hesse-Darmstadt. Elphinstone writes: “Your Majesty will find on the whole that Prince Arthur is improved by this visit to Darmstadt. It has smoothed down some of the angularity acquired by the military spirit of Berlin. . . . You will find him as quiet and considerate as ever and not in the least affected by the military bearing of his Prussian associates . . .” Her Majesty answered:

“ . . . The Queen hears from *every* one how *favourable* an impression Prince Arthur produced at Berlin. She thanks Sir Howard for all his kind care which helped to make the visit so successful. She is glad however that Darmstadt softened down the Military Angularity of Berlin which would *never do* HERE.

The Queen hopes to see Sir Howard either at Windsor or at Buckingham Palace.

The Queen is feeling tired and nervous and has really *never* had *any* time or opportunity to keep quiet and get rest and (undecipherable) to recover her long illness, and she sees no hope of this now till she goes to Scotland in May."

Ten days later she wrote :

" . . . The Queen fears she never sufficiently expressed her sense of the care he took about the subject of the Princesses, for she was *afraid* her letters and telegrams might have worried him. . . ."

If in minor matters Her Majesty was hard to please, yet not every Victorian parent gave their child such liberty of action in the important matter of marriage, or gave it so cordially. Over essentials it was what *he* wanted and not what *she* wished that ruled the decisions. Never does she urge upon him a bride whom *she* considered suitable ; her one anxiety was that the Prince should find a girl he could love who would make him happy. She took infinite pains to arrange that he should meet every available candidate, with as much freedom from formality or constraint as could be managed. The greater number of these letters of the 1870's are far too intimate for publication, for in them she is open, discussing every point at length and turning to Elphinstone for advice in the many complications involved over possible foreign alliances. "Pray give me your opinion," she writes, "the Queen feels the responsibility of the whole thing so great." Often in her letters comes the anxious cry, "What *can* be done?" and as time goes on she called upon him more and more for solutions, demanding an answer by telegram, messenger or cypher. She was cutting in her comments on certain kings and queens whom she considered foolish or frivolous or on the lack of education of princesses who were "not desirable" as daughters-in-law. "*Money* WITHOUT goodness or affection is useless," she writes. But it was Elphinstone whom she consulted, and she ends one letter with the words, "She will write to the Empress Queen as *he* advises." The feeling was plain that as in every fairy tale, it was the third son who must ride in and capture the prize ; she writes "Arthur deserves the very best we can get." It is not easy however to find perfection. There were princesses virtuous but plain ; others were pretty

but were coquettish and had the reputation of being jilts. Some were badly educated and some were delicate. Of one, whom she only saw when it was too late for further developments, she writes with an almost tragic *cri de cœur*, "She is *quite* lovely, so sweet and gentle and lovable *just* what the Queen would have liked. She is very tall and *elancée*. . . . In short, the Queen and Beatrice are full of *regrets* for she would have been *such* an ornament, and such a dear gentle thing who takes interest in all." But rumour had it that the lady though beautiful was brainless and the lovely butterfly flitted away across Europe in a different direction. The Prince had already looked at her and turned away. He thought her stupid—"and I think he is right" was Elphinstone's comment.

Sometimes a young lady would come to Windsor to be viewed by Her Majesty and on one occasion (the pretty princess had come through Paris and had evidently spent more time than the Queen ever did among the ribbons and laces of the Rue de la Paix) she writes :

" . . . She hardly thinks her as handsome as she expected—but a bonnet or hat perched up rather high is not exactly advantageous, but she is certainly very gentle and pleasing."

Sometimes Her Majesty received contradictory reports; of one extremely young princess who might in a few years become eligible, Elphinstone writes :

"She is tall and slimly built but not yet quite developed. Certainly handsome. The character seems a very fine one and there is a great air of nobility . . . withal there appears much fun . . ."

Whereas the Crown Princess says :

"I do not think her pleasing, very tall and lanky, sickly looking with fine eyes but a disagreeable looking mouth and an expression of 'ennuie' which is not prepossessing. What a lovely child she was—I see no trace of that now! . . . Some people think her handsome!"

True, there is a decided nervousness whenever anyone Russian is mentioned. But this was probably on moral rather than on racial grounds. At this time the Emperor Alexander had in the Winter Palace at St. Petersburg a wife who for years lived as a confirmed invalid. He had also in the palace a mistress, the

Princess Katherine Dolgourouki, of whom a charming account has been written by Princess Marthe Bibesco in her book *Katia*. However delightful the lady may have been, this was not the background that Her Majesty desired for her son's wife. The cry, "God knows *we don't* want a *second Russian Element*" surely related to this aspect, for of the Russian Grand Duchess Marie who married Prince Alfred and whose advent she dreaded, she eventually had nothing but good to tell and wrote of her as "a very dear clever amiable and *sensible* girl." ". . . no doubt the German Element is going more and more out of the family to the Queen's great sorrow, but how *can* that be helped. *Northern* Germany she has no great sympathy with," she says. Interference in this matter by her elder children the Queen did not approve of. "She hopes he (Prince Arthur) will never listen to advice upon such a subject from *any* quarter excepting *Sir Howard* and the *Queen*. . . . The Queen moreover is quite prepared for the possibility of Arthur's choosing a British subject which she would not object to if the person be all we can desire. The Queen is glad to hear that dear Arthur is so much liked and that *he* is pleased, though the *pride* and stiffness there (i.e. in Germany) is *not* what we should wish him, as Sir Howard knows, to imitate. The Queen hopes Sir Howard is keeping well." Later she writes: "The Queen thinks he should see every possible Princess, if *no one* *suits* abroad, a young lady of the Nobility, *well brought up* . . . is perfectly possible and allowable, and *far* better than an *unsuitable* Princess. . . ." She wished things to be in her own hands and she must be informed of all that went on. "The more the Queen thinks of it the more *indignant* she feels; there is something at the bottom which she *don't know*." Of one rumour she wrote with scorn and ended her letter with the words, "but the Queen *don't believe it*." Various queens were involved in this correspondence and things became so confusing in her letters to Elphinstone that for a time she broke her rule of writing invariably in the third person and talked instead of "me and mine, you and yours" to avoid getting inextricably entangled between herself and the Queen of this or that country; and these letters she ends "Yours truly, V.R." "I use the 1st person as it is easier to write and will prevent *all* confusion between the two Queens," she says. Often comes the phrase "Pray telegraph and write as soon as possible. . . ."

CHAPTER XXV: OF CARPETS—QUEENS—AND
KINGS

IN all these years Sir Howard wrote of very many things:

“Of shoes—and ships—and sealing-wax—
... cabbages ... and whether pigs have wings?”

Unfortunately we are not given the answer to the last conundrum—but there is no doubt that a certain prince was growing a very fine pair. Of ships we hear a great deal, and what Elphinstone wrote might well be read in the nursery as a warning to the young. For in our own far-distant schoolroom days on the map of Europe the North Sea was painted a pale blue indicating shallow water, and giving to the ignorant an idea of mill-ponds; an illusion from which there came later a rude awakening. Elphinstone told the Queen that in July 1873 on the way to a coronation at Trondjem H.M.S. *Enchantress* “rolled a great deal, both companion ladders were smashed and one heavy sea was shipped aft which swamped several of the cabins ... one of the connecting rods of the paddle broke and smashed several floats. Fortunately it lulled sufficiently for a couple of hours to enable the damage to be repaired. ... The Prince stood the motion well until midday when he succumbed. Mr. Fitzgerald (the Prince’s equerry) never made his appearance. Once within the Fjords the sea became smooth and on reaching our escort squadron there was barely a ripple on the water and a blue sky overhead.”

There were other horrors of the deep of which he did not tell the Queen; but his sketch book, while including some luminous notes of fjord and mountains among alternating showers and sunshine, gives us also records of impromptu descents down companion-ways, of cabin curtains hanging at acute angles from the walls, of cabins where combs and candlesticks go sailing on the watery floor, and a careful pencil drawing entitled “It is but too true,” showing black beetles crawling among hairbrushes. More conventional sketches were sent to Osborne and Balmoral for which the Queen sent thanks. A frequent phrase comes in the letters, “It will amuse Your Majesty to hear that——” and there follows a tale of some episode or other, a clear-cut miniature of a function or a minor horror of peace. During manoeuvres

in Silesia one boiling hot September he writes, "In the evening there was a ball in the concert room at Breslau. It was a strange sight. Over 1,500 officers were assembled in full dress, crowding every passage and room, whereas the ladies did not exceed 150 in number. The heat was intense yet all the windows were shut resembling more a furnace. The Emperor seemed not however to suffer and remained for nearly three hours talking to different people the whole time."

Another episode of which we are told was an agricultural show in the midlands, the cabbages in one marquee, the county congregated in another, where after a lunch lasting two hours the rain and the Mayor's speech started simultaneously. This would not have mattered had not the tent leaked villainously and had not the Mayor been in love with his own voice. As it was, the audience sat on interminably with umbrellas dripping into empty wineglasses, patiently listening to the double deluge.

If the Queen enjoyed hearing of these things, Sir Howard meanwhile enjoyed her confidence. There is a story told of a conversation overheard in London about this time. Elphinstone's name was mentioned and roused the rather acid comment: "Sir Howard Elphinstone? Why the Queen can't even choose a carpet without consulting him!" About the carpets we have no certain knowledge, but a number of other problems had to be dealt with, matrimonial alliances, religious practices, the Prussian character, all are discussed. There were difficult moments; manœuvres clashed with weddings; certain folk were dilatory in answering questions; some people were tactless and others interfering. In all these matters Elphinstone's powers of diplomacy had scope.

Among other things she trusted him with some confidential negotiations with the King of Hanover, who, after having been expelled from his kingdom in the Prussian Wars, was now living in Paris. The King, who was blind, was not prompt in his methods and would not be hurried. "Sir Howard fears that it will be very difficult to get an early answer from the King of Hanover. Whilst he was in Paris he learnt how slowly the King composes a letter and how often he corrects and alters it. The very shortest time possible he understands would be an entire week to compose the draft. . . . Ten days before that draft will be finally delivered. Another week perhaps before the answer is sent so that we can hardly expect a positive reply before three weeks. . . . Sir Howard will however write to one

of the gentlemen and hear when the reply may be expected." Queen Victoria was not accustomed to being kept waiting three weeks for an answer even from an elderly cousin, and she suggested to Elphinstone, "I think you *might* be *intentionally* a *little* indiscreet and get at the truth through Countess Brenner or one of the gentlemen." This was done, and Countess Brenner, a lady-in-waiting of the Queen of Hanover, proved helpful, besides giving some curious descriptions of her royalties :

"Our Royal Family, excellent as they are individually, are sometimes hopeless *as a whole*, she writes. I fear that his Majesty in his great wisdom, has misinterpreted and mismanaged matters. What can you expect from a man who insists that the sun is not the sun as we suppose it to be, but a 'hole in the heavens,' in point of fact a kind of transparency. After this we may be prepared for any idea, however wild."

The negotiations were doomed to failure and the answer when it came was an involved negative. Elphinstone wrote :

ALDERSHOT. *Sunday night.*

8th April 1877.

"With his most humble duty Sir Howard Elphinstone begs to enclose herewith the *translation* of the German letter together with the copy of the original, and he hopes Your Majesty will excuse some of the very awkward expressions he has made use of, as he found it almost impossible to render literally many of the sentences if he transposed them into ordinary language. They are much involved. . . . If the correspondence that has passed is a fair specimen, Your Majesty may indeed congratulate yourself on the failure. If 7 weeks are allowed to pass before sending a reply to such a question which should never be delayed, especially if the reply is a 'negative,' Your Majesty would have indeed been inconvenienced, and many difficulties might have occurred. Altogether one cannot help having a feeling of great relief in putting aside this question."

During some other negotiations Elphinstone writes a sentence that is typical of his character :

" . . . Sir Howard need hardly assure Your Majesty that he has been cautious in what he said and from the very first interview he at once decided to keep himself altogether in the background."

In June 1875 Her Majesty wrote from Balmoral :

“The Queen is shocked not sooner to have answered Sir Howard Elphinstone’s kind letters and thanked him for his good wishes for her birthday which she does now.

The Queen is very anxious to know if *nothing* has passed relative to Prince Arthur’s *summer* plan or his *future* either with Princess Alice or the Prince of Wales or between Sir Howard and Princess Alice. . . . We have had splendid weather only too hot sun and too little rain. We had a showery and rather cold ten days from about four days after our arrival, but the last days of May and the whole of June have been *very fine* and the bloom of every thing is marvellously beautiful ; quantities of lilac, laburnums, etc., smelling beautifully as well as the sweet briar and birches. And the broom is splendid, one mass of gold over all the banks and fields.”

Elphinstone “hastens to acknowledge the receipt of Your gracious letter ” and gives a rough outline of the plans for the autumn, German manœuvres to be watched first in Hanover and later in Silesia and he concludes with a description of wretched weather, thunder showers and cold alternating with broiling sun “and the flower gardens looking very miserable and the country generally not bright . . .” The weather instead of better grew worse and had a damping effect the following month upon English manœuvres. The young Prince Imperial was with the British army in camp near Aldershot and Her Majesty wrote :

WINDSOR CASTLE, *July 5th* 1875.

“ . . . The Queen feels a real affectionate interest in the young Prince Imperial and would be thankful if Sir Howard could tell her how he gets on and *if he is in good hands*, with a good set. She is the more anxious as the Empress Eugénie told her he was quite alone and without even a confidential valet, which *she* thinks a mistake and what she herself would never have done. One’s heart sinks within one when one thinks of young Princes or indeed any young men being exposed to the contact of such men as Colonel (name quite undecipherable).”

Elphinstone replies from Aldershot the following day : “The Prince Imperial is in good hands, as the Captain of his battery is an excellent man. Sir Howard will go over tomorrow and

see whether he can be of use in any way and will let Your Majesty know . . .” A few days later he wrote :

“The continuance of rain has rather damped the ardour of the soldiers for their manœuvres. The camps look very dismal—one mass of black mud and wet tents—nevertheless the men are particularly healthy, and even the horses are not suffering much.

Prince Arthur is doing his Brigade Major’s work particularly well, and his Brigadier, Col. Baillie of the ‘Blues,’ is much pleased with him.

It was a curious sight yesterday—everybody who could appeared in waterproofs (the only clothing that was not wet through). The Prince Imperial is encamped with his battery in a dismal place called ‘Colony Bog,’ and he, like all the other young fellows, rather enjoys the change. While his brother officers were digging trenches round their tents to try and divert the rain, he was busily engaged cooking the dinners :—being a Frenchman, as he said, it was his *métier* to look after the cuisine. He seemed very much gratified at the deep interest Your Majesty takes in his welfare, and while expressing his grateful thanks, said that he was as happy as it was possible to be.”

Though the weather abroad that autumn was better than it had been in England in July, matters did not go so smoothly over the German manœuvres. Before Prince Arthur left to attend these Elphinstone received a long letter from Her Majesty. Princess Amélie of Saxe-Coburg was to be married to

“the brother of the Empress of Austria on 12 Sept. *en famille at Ebenthal*, and is extremely anxious that Prince Arthur should be present, a thought which had struck the Queen before as *a right thing to do*. She is the last and *only Princess of Coburg* and most intimate with our daughters as indeed the whole family have always been with us and our children, and the Duke of Coburg has (most injudiciously) refused to have the marriage at Coburg where it *ought* to have been, and where the eldest sister, Princess Clotilde was married in 1866. The Queen would therefore *wish* Prince Arthur to *manage* this. . . . She is *most* anxious that he should *go* to the marriage, to which he is specially *invited*.

The improvement in the weather is a great thing. The Queen will write to Prince Arthur, but she will wait till she hears about

this. It *ought to be* done and *no* other one of the family could go."

Arrangements were therefore made to combine both the manœuvres and marriage, but when they were already at Darmstadt plans were "most dreadfully interfered with" by the German Crown Prince announcing that the date of the former had been changed and clashed with that of the wedding. "As soon as the Emperor heard of Prince Arthur's wish to see the German manœuvres special arrangements were made, a château in Silesia has been specially given up to him by the owner." Elphinstone thought it was therefore impossible to be present at the wedding. This alteration did not please the Queen.

BALMORAL, Aug. 31, 1875.

"The Queen was going to write to Sir Howard today to thank him for 3 very interesting letters of the 20th from Zurich, 22nd from Lucerne and 25th from Heidelberg, approving *all* that has been done, when she received this morning the letter which she encloses for Prince Arthur, with the *extraordinary* proposal about the marriage which she has at once answered in the negative.

It is too *bad* of the Crown Prince to have tried to make a family event of this kind be *thrown overboard* for Prussian Reviews.

It would produce offence never to be *got over*, and it is like the overbearing imperious German notions, which the Crown Prince *unfortunately* also possesses, to *think* that *everything* should *give way* to *that*.

It *cannot* and *must* not be. Gmunden *too* must be *visited*. German reviews can be seen *any* year, whereas *THIS* marriage of the last Princess of our family *cannot*.

Use *every* reason if people complain, but it *must* be done . . . For safety's sake she encloses to Sir Howard the key of the bag containing Prince Leopold's and Princess Beatrice's presents to Princess Amélie for fear Prince Arthur should lose it. Her very valuable present which she also hopes Sir Howard will watch over, goes also under cover to Prince Arthur today."

Elphinstone answered from Potsdam, acknowledging the key and continued :

"He is extremely sorry indeed at the complications caused by the change of date of the manœuvres, and had he been aware

that Your Majesty laid so much stress upon Prince Arthur's presence at the marriage a good deal of the trouble and annoyance to Your Majesty might have been probably saved. He thought however that Prince Arthur's going to Vienna, was not of great importance, and could consequently be dispensed with, and not until Your second telegram was he made aware of the importance You attached to the visit.

At the same time he is obliged to state to Your Majesty that Prince Arthur's position was not an easy one. Your Majesty may not be aware, though here it is apparent in almost every class of society, that there is a very strong feeling against England, stronger even than it was during the war, and that it therefore became Prince Arthur's duty not to do anything to offend and thus increase this feeling. At the Emperor's special request a Count Fichtenberg, one of the leading people in Silesia, had vacated his house with his family and placed the whole of it at the Prince's disposal, going to some expense in fitting it up so as to suit the Prince's tastes. To refuse going there after all the arrangements had been made, required consequently a very strong motive indeed, as thereby the Prince offended not only the owner himself, and thus increased the irritation against England, but it appeared that the Emperor would have been annoyed at having had to ask this favor of the Count quite unnecessarily. It was a question of far graver import than one which affected only Prince Arthur's likes or dislikes, and therefore Sir Howard advocated the Silesian visit until he became aware that Your Majesty considered the marriage as one of great family importance. This of course changed the question, and arrangements have consequently been made for the Prince's departure for Vienna. Sir Howard must say that Prince Arthur then agreed to this very willingly, although it entirely upset the whole object of his visit abroad, will prevent his having more than two days of the manœuvres and yet force him to incur a considerable expense. Sir Howard mentions this to show Your Majesty that Prince Arthur is not so much to blame as may at first sight be considered, that political reasons influenced him at first as much as personal wishes, and that he never considered his own views the moment he saw that You considered his presence at Ebenthal of such family importance."

BALMORAL, *Sept. 9, 1875.*

"The Queen thanks Sir Howard Elphinstone for his two letters of the 1st and the 4th.

She quite understands the difficulty in which Sir Howard and Arthur were placed, but thinks that a *prior* engagement for a marriage of one of our nearest relations where he was to go and represent the Queen and *all* the family, and the young Princess being a Princess of our own family with whom we have always been very intimate and the Bridegroom the Empress of Austria's Brother, ought to have *stopped at once* the *idea* of throwing THAT over for a Prussian Review, even *if* the Prussian Germans (undecipherable) to be insolent and cold towards us. While civility and conciliatory conduct are *greatly to be wished and desired*, anything like *trying to flatter*, or in *anyway yield to their* overbearingness must be most cautiously avoided."

"Overbearing imperious German notions." Her Majesty had vision.

CHAPTER XXVI: CONTINENTAL CAPITALS

THE year 1873 was one of much travel; January found the Prince starting for Darmstadt *en route* to Rome where the Queen wished him to be incognito, to see the sights without being too gay. She wrote two letters on the subject.

OSBORNE, *Jan.* 31, 1873.

"The Queen has to thank Sir Howard Elphinstone for 3 letters from Dover, Darmstadt and Rome of 24th, only received to-day.

They ought not to take so long going.

Reuter telegraphs everything you do, and everything is so publicly announced in the papers that the Queen has been rather annoyed at it as she had hoped to keep it quiet.

However the visits were *quite* right and he could not avoid dining with the Crown Prince and Princess of Italy. But intimacy with the King and Crown Prince should be avoided and *not* much going out of an evening. The Queen was grieved to hear of the bad headaches at Darmstadt and his Sisters thought him looking ill. Great fatigue *must* be avoided for him, and Sir Howard must think of *sometime* in the year when he could have a *month's complete* rest, as most official people have, without Military duties or any Balls, etc.

It is necessary for everyone, for body and soul and the absence of it in the present day is so detrimental to young people of high rank and leads to that *want* of constant excitement which *ought* not to be indulged in. The Queen is also anxious that Prince Arthur should not accept Public Dinners or other Public functions *without consulting the Queen*—as we are anxious to *check* the number of *Royal doings* a little to prevent them becoming too common.

The Russian match is certainly coming on again ¹ by a *direct* advance from the Emperor through Count Schouvaloff. It is a very doubtful thing. But though much disliking the departure from the Protestant religion, the Queen can hardly oppose it, as Prince Alfred has such a *very* strong desire for it.

Would Sir Howard buy something in Italy for Arthur for his birthday?

Hoping that he is well and trusting that the weather may improve.

It is very cold now, since 10 days. Not much frost, but a cold high wind.

Give Arthur her best love."

A month later she wrote :

"Then as regards the *going* out so much, the Queen does *much* and deeply regrets both for *soul* and *body* that instead of one season he will have had two this year and perpetual excitement, noise and parties etc. etc. It is *not* that she *fears* his being led into evil, she has *no fear of that* but it encourages that prevailing bad habit of the present day, amusement and excitement and weakens and exhausts brain and body and of course makes him find a quiet life at home with his Mother very dull. *This* is what the Queen grieves over.

She *hopes* (as she wrote to him) that he keeps short notes of all he sees on each day, and indeed he should always do so, just a few words, else life passes quite like a dream! The Queen finds the advantage of her journal *every day*, tedious tho' it often is to write, for she finds everything *there* which others may have forgotten the existence of. And it helps to *impress* everything on the mind. If he would take short notes, and when he comes home, write it out fully, that would be of immense use, and an interesting occupation.

Upon the *other* subject she feels *sure* all will come right again,

¹ Between Prince Alfred and the Grand Duchess Marie.

and Sir Howard should just remind him (not now) when he comes to stay with the Queen that that stiffness is *not* requisite in *her* House and with her own *confidential* people, and that open frankness in those below you, when they *are* devoted and attached is a thing for which *you ought* to be *truly* thankful.

And also that he ought to look to the Queen's *example* and not fancy that *he* is to *carry* military discipline *into* her home. Don't allude to it *now*, because it would make him impatient, but *only* before he comes to *stay*—JUST to remind *him*.

The Queen wishes him to be beloved as his elder Brother is. . . .

Does Sir Howard think Arthur has profited by what he saw and has had a good Cicerone?

. . . She hopes Sir Howard himself is well?"

Even incognito, it was not easy for a Prince of Great Britain to visit European capitals and remain quiet. Prince Arthur was 23, and was not only good looking but had the power to charm. Elphinstone himself was only 42 and was not unattractive. Rome was gay, too gay to her Majesty's mind, and a few months later, before Prince Arthur visited Vienna with the Prince of Wales to be present at the opening of an international exhibition, there comes a letter from Osborne warning about too much frivolity, and the "almost universally disreputable Vienna ladies." Elphinstone writes to assure the Queen that

"The Prince of Wales seemed thoroughly to understand the necessity of looking after Prince Arthur while in Vienna, and has promised to do so,"

but Her Majesty remained mistrustful, though the letters that she received from Vienna were discretion itself. Apart from the Empress not a lady is mentioned. The time seemed spent entirely in ceremony and watching military exercises. We are told of the opening of the Exhibition in the enormous hall, the diameter more than double that of the Dome of St. Peter's. The Emperor spoke very clearly as he stood on a raised dais between the Prince of Wales and the Crown Prince of Prussia.

"It was difficult to judge of his reception in the building, as one hardly knows the usual reception here. But to English ears it was most unsympathetic. One attempt was made to raise a cheer—it was only one—but it was a poor one and fell cold and

dead. Yet everybody speaks most highly of the Emperor and the Empress seems universally beloved.

The English section was particularly excellent in its display of agricultural implements. In this respect no other nation can in any way come near it. The display of carpets and stuffs from India are likewise very fine."

The Prince of Wales wrote to the Queen at the end of their stay :

"Although Arthur only precedes me by a few days I shall be very sorry to lose him as we have been so happy together and I could not wish for a pleasanter or more sociable companion than dear Arthur, and he is so good in every respect and liked by everybody. We three other brothers would do well to copy him and if dear Papa could see him now he would be his pride as he always was as a child."

Her Majesty sent a copy of this letter to Elphinstone, but she wrote :

"The very reasons which make Prince Arthur so pleasant a companion to the Prince of Wales are those which have made him less so to the Queen, viz. his love of amusement and his *too* great acquaintance with fashionable society—out of all which the Queen lives now to so great an extent.

But all that may alter."

Her Majesty's fears were groundless. Elphinstone answers assuring her that :

"The visit to Vienna has . . . done a great deal of good, as he became wearied of the constant life of pleasure and the late hours. Although he made himself agreeable as a companion to the Prince of Wales this has not been so in the sense in which Your Majesty fears, for Prince Arthur has returned from Vienna far steadier and less inclined to attend frivolous amusements than he was before."

The Prince of Wales had appointed Elphinstone to be Vice-President of the English section of the Vienna Exhibition so that with this and the military inspections and royal functions he was kept busy. Yet in spite of his letters telling only of such things we know that Vienna was not a town entirely inhabited by males. Many people might indeed say that the ladies of the place were almost universally attractive. It was spring

with the sun glinting on the young leaves of the trees and bringing out the scent of the lilac. The strains of Johann Strauss had already captivated the Prince—was it possible they were now about to lay their magic upon the heart of his Comptroller? After that early flaming episode of Miss Stopford we get no mention of any young lady or any hint that Elphinstone's eyes strayed beyond his work. He was known to be "very particular about women"—when he had gone to Paris in 1857 to receive the Legion of Honour he had admired the ladies dresses but found that "there was hardly one pretty face"—yet his keen personality could hold the interest that was aroused by his good looks and by his Victoria Cross, and women certainly were not unconscious of him. In later years an echo was occasionally caught by a daughter who found that by chance she sometimes struck a spark from an elderly aristocratic eye, and a husky voice would turn mellow as it ejaculated "What? You are a daughter of Sir Howard Elphinstone? Oh, I knew him *very* well many years ago in Rome"—or it might be Vienna or Berlin. Now it seems that somewhere and somehow—perhaps driving along the Kärtnerstrasse or in the Prater—perhaps in full dress at Schönbrunn or the Hof Palais—perhaps in some embassy ball-room filled with melody from unrivalled orchestras—somehow or somewhere—someone must have crossed his path who made him halt and turn. Because that summer, after they had sailed in Scandinavian waters, Elphinstone writes from Copenhagen thanking Her Majesty for "permitting him to remain abroad instead of coming home with the Prince. He would not have ventured to ask had it not been concerning a matter that affects him very closely and in which his presence is most urgently necessary. . . . He will not remain longer at Vienna than is absolutely necessary. His address will be the English Embassy. . . ."

Three years later an almost identical letter is written except that Paris and not Vienna is to be his destination; the Paris letter is but the prelude to a long chapter. To the Vienna letter there comes no sequel. Who was she? English and virtuous? Austrian and surely equally virtuous? Did she come from some foreign Embassy or Legation? Was she tall and dark and haughty that she refused him, was she fair and young and a mere slip of a child who did not know her own mind or did some insuperable difficulty intervene? We do not know.

January 1874 found them back in Berlin. The Empress Augusta always treated Elphinstone with friendliness and as usual we get an account of an audience with her and gracious messages sent to Queen Victoria with hopes of an early meeting. This time we hear of the Emperor's ageing looks and "that apparent entire loss of memory." The world evidently thought him dying—yet he lived another fourteen years.

Berlin was but a stepping-stone and on January 15 Elphinstone sent a telegram from "The Winter Palace, St. Petersburg," addressed to "La Reine d'Angleterre, Osborne," saying :

"Arrived safely at two-thirty. Prince Arthur quite well and not cold."

On January 20th after finishing a long letter to Elphinstone Her Majesty writes :

"The Queen reopens her letter to thank Sir Howard for his of the 15th the first she has *received from* St. Petersburg and therefore *especially welcome*. . . . Would he tell Sir John Cowell to write to the Queen some of the details of the mode of life in the Winter Palace and the hours, meals, servants, cooking, etc. etc. . . ."

The reason of this visit was the marriage of Prince Alfred to the Grand Duchess Marie, the daughter of the Emperor. It was a large party that travelled from England via Berlin, including the Prince and Princess of Wales and Prince Arthur. We are given a description of a corridor carriage, the first in Europe that Elphinstone had encountered.

WINTER PALACE, ST. PETERSBURG,

15th Jan. 1874.

"Sir Howard Elphinstone presents his most humble duty to Your Majesty and begs to announce the arrival here after a most comfortable journey from Berlin. The train was most luxuriously fitted up, much like the American fashion, with separate sleeping cabins for each person, a large saloon of assembly and a still larger dining-room, at which we sat down 27 people. The train was exactly 1,050 feet long, and the carriages were all joined with a central passage throughout. Although not cold outside, the carriages were intensely heated so that Lady Aylesbury and Mrs. Wellesley are far from well with very bad colds. The Princess is very well and so is Prince Arthur, who has certainly lost his neuralgia.

At half past 12 the Caezarevitch and Caezarovna joined the train and lunched with the Prince and Princess of Wales. They were received here at the station by the Emperor and all the Royalties. The Empress is unfortunately suffering and not able to go out."

Of the wedding ceremony Elphinstone tells the Queen nothing as "You will already have received full accounts from Lady Augusta Stanley," but of the blessing of the Neva he writes :

"At an early hour this morning the Palace was opened, and its huge and magnificent saloons filled with people in full costume. Every noble, official of rank and every officer is supposed to attend, and these grand rooms, large and numerous as they are, were completely filled. At 12 o'clock the Emperor and the Russian Royalties proceeded to the church and attended the service, which so far as the music went was magnificent, and moreover very imposing. A procession was then formed, preceded by the clergy, choristers, Deacons and Bishops etc. and followed by the chief of the officers in magnificent uniforms, to the Banks of the Neva, where after certain religious ceremonies and singing, the ice was broken, some water raised and blessed by the Chief of the Greek Church—a rocket and cannonade of guns announced this to the mass of people, who showed great religious excitement. Holy water was then sprinkled over the bystanders and the Emperor and all his family underwent the process of kissing the crucifix, and likewise the hand of the Patriarch of the Church. Meanwhile the standards of all the different regiments around St. Petersburg had been collected and the process of blessing these by sprinkling them with holy water was carefully gone through. The soldiers who carried them seemed fully alive to and excited about the holy ceremony. Fortunately the weather was mild, or serious consequences must have followed of standing there uncovered in their uniforms.

An interesting ceremony now followed of the Emperor inspecting inside the Palace a detachment sent specially from each regiment around St. Petersburg. The men were of course 'picked' and certainly splendid looking soldiers.

The Old Guard and the Cossacks of the Guard were magnificent, far finer in height and 'physique' than our Life Guards. The standards just blessed, were paraded before the men and marched past in procession, each detachment as the Emperor

passed, calling out in Russian 'God bless you!' The affect was unquestionably very fine and imposing.

Luncheon had been spread in different rooms for 500 people, and shortly afterwards people separated."

Then followed a busy time between functions, military inspections and sport.

At St. Petersburg they now went with the Emperor to a bear hunt.

"We drove about 12 miles in sleighs through a barren district with but here and there vegetation. Through the two villages we passed the peasants had collected notwithstanding the drifting snow, to offer with uncovered heads bread and salt to the Emperor. The breakfast was in the wood in deep snow all round."

Such things as these

"offered a great relief to the otherwise monotonous and wearisome nature of Court life here. . . ."

Of the banquet and ball after the marriage he writes :

"The heat of the rooms at these entertainments is almost unbearable, and several ladies left the ballroom almost in a fainting state. Notwithstanding this serious defect everything has been done on a scale of magnitude and magnificence which it is impossible to surpass and which could not be equalled in any but such huge palaces. . . . They have a very pretty way of introducing into their rooms evergreens, shrubs and palm trees etc. which has an extremely good effect, and adds much to the beauty as well as to the comfort of the rooms ; there is not a palace we have entered where this style of decoration is not used.

In the supper room to-morrow where 500 people will sit down at 50 different tables palm and exotics have been used to so large an extent that it gives the place the appearance of a conservatory ; the effect is very fine.

Sir John Cowell will send Your Majesty some account of the system of the servants, the meals etc. etc. It is altogether very different to ours and appears devoid of any system.

The number of people attached to the palaces is enormous, in addition to which any number of soldiers is constantly called in to 'help.' During the last few days a detachment of over

300 has been employed to move tables and chairs and assist in placing the candles."

Prince Arthur writing to his mother of a ball at the British Embassy says "the heat was frightful. I think you would have died of it if you had been there."

From the Kremlin Elphinstone wrote of an overheated journey to Moscow, across "an uninteresting plain" of nearly 300 miles, passing only five villages :

"We stopped for half an hour at midday for luncheon, and again at 5 for dinner. Both these meals had been sent specially from St. Petersburg, with plate, servants, cooks, etc. as nothing eatable could be had in these small places.

Moscow is very curious, quite peculiar in its way, and quite different to St. Petersburg. Here the streets are narrow, and the houses have all an Eastern character, interspersed with churches innumerable, all adorned with gilt cupolas. The effect is most picturesque.

This morning at 11 occurred a most interesting visit to the grand old Church of the Assumption in the Kremlin. The Emperor and all the Royalties entered in grand procession, followed by innumerable suite and officers. The usual service was performed in the church, which dates from the 14th century, and is quite eastern in character, and magnificently decorated with saints' pictures and gold ornaments : after which the Czar and the other Russian Royalties including the Cæsarovna¹ kissed the different images of the saints held sacred in this church. The music was very fine, and the "Coup d'œil" really magnificent.

This religious ceremony was followed by the usual parade of a section of the garrison assembled in the riding school. Sir Howard replied this morning in cypher to Your Majesty's telegram because a great amount of caution is necessary. One of the Duke of Edinburgh's letters had been opened, and as every word one says or any act one does is watched, Your Majesty will understand that one cannot say all that one wishes, and that the letters sent by post must therefore be guarded."

Once again Elphinstone did not return to England with Prince Arthur, for the visit to Russia ended for him in sorrow. His mother's health for some years had given him anxiety—we are

¹ Sister of the Princess of Wales.

told of a hurried visit from London to Cornwall on her account. Now at Moscow he heard of her sudden death, and he travelled to Montreux too late for anything but the funeral. Thanking the Queen for her sympathy he says :

“the loss of a mother is indeed a hard trial . . . and felt more severely even in after life than in youth. . . .”

A chapter of his home life had closed. It was two years before he was to open the next.

CHAPTER XXVII : *ELPHINSTONE'S MARRIAGE*

WE have no private letters or diaries of Elphinstone's during the ten years from 1866 to 1876 ; from his formal letters it is not easy to know anything of his intimate thoughts. He had little opportunity for private life and with the death of his mother in 1874 home ceased for him. The three sisters were married and he had not much in common with their husbands, and from now on Nicolai and his family were the only ones with whom he kept in close touch. It seemed as if he was heading towards old age as a lonely bachelor when the year 1876 gave a twist to his affairs that changed the tenor of his life.

He was 46 when he wrote this time asking for permission to go abroad on “urgent private affairs which he cannot well postpone.”

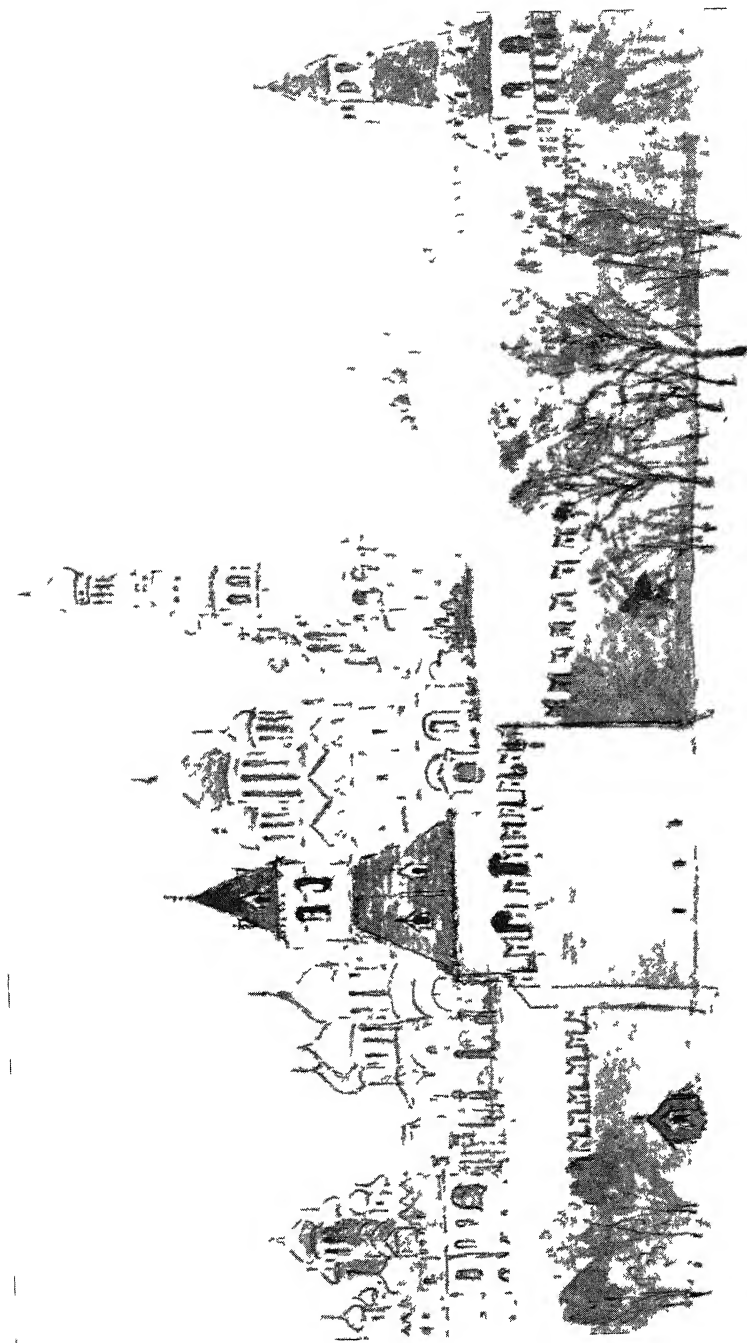
Three days later he writes from the Hotel Windsor, Paris :

29th June, 1876.

“With his most humble duty Sir Howard Elphinstone begs to acknowledge the receipt of Your Majesty's gracious letter.

By this time you will have been informed of the step he has taken, and he earnestly begs to assure Your Majesty that no consideration in the world will ever induce him to neglect his duty towards Prince Arthur and that his time shall be as completely as ever entirely at Your Majesty's commands, and be as earnestly devoted to Your wishes as it has been.

He returns to Aldershot by this day's mail and will await Your Commands as to what day You prefer to see him next week.”



Kremlin picture 75

The Kremlin, Moscow
From a sketch by Sir Howard Elphinstone



Lady Elphinstone

Had he not the courage to announce his engagement himself? That the Queen did not always approve of her devoted servants getting married is shown by her curious comment on Lady Augusta becoming engaged to Dean Stanley—"so unnecessary."

WINDSOR CASTLE, *July 1, 1876.*

"The Queen thanks Sir Howard Elphinstone for his kind note as well as for the communication through Lady Ely of the very important event in his life about to take place.

The Queen wishes Sir Howard to accept her very sincere congratulations on his engagement to Miss Cole, which she trusts will secure his happiness.

She feels sure that Sir Howard is far too conscientious ever to let his private affairs interfere with his services to herself and her dear son, of which she has had so many proofs during the last 17 years."

Was the Queen surprised at the turn of events? It was indeed an astonishing engagement. He was halfway between 46 and 47 and the girl he meant to marry was barely 20. If he had chosen some favourite maid of honour or a lovely daughter of one of her ladies the Queen's letter might perhaps have been less formal. But of this Miss Annie Frances Cole Her Majesty knew nothing. Certain friends of the young lady's brother who held honourable names such as Balfour and Lyttelton and who towards the end of her reign were to swing into her Majesty's orbit might have been able to enlighten her and tell of a girl with flaming auburn hair, a gay smile and a character clear as crystal who for three years had set hearts beating fast at Cambridge during May Week, at Cannes in the spring or tramping the stubble after the guns in East Anglia during the shooting season. But that this girl of 20 should have met the elderly busy soldier was almost as improbable as that they should have found anything in common if they did meet. Sir Howard was as unlikely to go to Lord's or the 4th of June as was Miss Cole to visit crowned heads at Berlin or Vienna. But Sir John Cowell's wife had a sister and this sister was a friend of Miss Cole's mother; and no difference of age or anything else in the world could stand in the way of this pair once they had met.

How could the Queen have known that this mere child possessed fearless courage, unswerving loyalty, imperturbable good temper and the infectious power of keen enjoyment and that throughout her long life these qualities would never fail either

her husband, her Queen or anyone to whom she gave her friendship. Sir Howard's search was ended.

On this same day, July 1st, Elphinstone forwarded the Queen's letter to Giffords' Hall in Suffolk, the home of his fiancée.

WINDSOR CASTLE, 1st July, 1876.

"MY DEAR LITTLE DARLING,

I send herewith two letters which will interest you, the one from the Queen I found here on my arrival this afternoon, and considering that it is from the Sovereign to a humble individual like myself, I consider it particularly gracious. You can show it to your Mama and if she likes to send it on to her parents as proof that the Queen is pleased at our engagement, she is quite at liberty to do so. The other is from Prince Arthur and from its tenor you will see how thoroughly he has my happiness at heart. As soon as you have read this letter of his pray destroy it, as it refers to private matters of his own which I do not wish spoken about. But you may if you like read aloud to the others that part which refers strictly to you and I. You see I am determined to trust you, even in things which must be kept secret.

I dined with the Queen this evening and she was very nice and gracious and you may feel quite sure that she is most kindly disposed towards you. She will be so for my sake on first meeting you, but afterwards I know this will increase from a better knowledge of yourself. Prince Leopold likewise is most kind about it, and made all kinds of enquiries about you and your name, etc., etc. He wanted particularly to know what had especially attracted me towards you, because he thought that I never would have married being so frightfully particular. When I told him that the chief cause was your complete unselfishness and bright nature, he said, 'I don't believe in a truly unselfish woman, but if she is so indeed, as you say, you are a very lucky fellow.'

Princess Beatrice likewise congratulated me and hoped you were very nice, which I had no hesitation in answering.

You would have been amused however by the enquiries from everybody here, respecting yourself. Questions of all kinds were asked, which however I was determined not to answer, as I do not choose to gratify simple idle curiosity. Your own worth they will find out when they know you. . . ."

The pair were making plans to be married in the winter when

the calm of Giffords' Hall was shattered one morning in October by a telegram from Elphinstone sent from Buckingham Palace asking if it was possible to be married immediately.

My mother was not one of those people who dislike the unexpected and she rose to the occasion with joy. The reason for this possible hurry was that the situation in the Near East and Balkans was critical and Elphinstone had been offered a secret mission which would take him to that part of the world for an indefinite time. The decision, however, rested with the Queen and her veto ever remained a disappointment. Her letter on the subject is missing, but one from the Duke of Cambridge says :

"I confess I am *disappointed* at your not being allowed to go and I do not quite see the force of the argument against your selection, but I may be in error. You would in my humble opinion have been quite the *right man in the right place*."

They were married eventually on December 5th and kept the ceremony quiet from all but their near friends.

On one point Elphinstone was right. If the Queen received young Lady Elphinstone with kindness for the sake of Sir Howard—her comment in her journal on meeting her the first time was : "A very pleasing bright pretty little thing," yet later this kindness increased from knowledge of the young woman. She lost no time in becoming better acquainted. The pair returned from their honeymoon in Corsica, whither they had gone unaccompanied by a valet or maid much to Her Majesty's surprise—and four days afterwards they went to Windsor to stay.

On one of these visits shortly after their marriage the Queen announced after lunch that she would go for a drive and would be pleased if Lady Elphinstone would accompany her, and Lady Elphinstone alone did accompany her. It must have been an ordeal for a young woman not yet 21, knowing that she was on her trial. But Her Majesty could deal successfully with nervous people and she returned from that drive satisfied with Sir Howard's wife ; from that moment she gave her her confidence and a friendship that increased through the years. Indeed, from the past I can still hear the happiness ringing in an old voice as it cried :

"*Dear Lady Elphinstone, how pleased I am to see you !*"

CHAPTER XXVIII : ALDERSHOT

EARLY in 1877 Elphinstone took up the command of Troops and Companies Royal Engineers at Aldershot and during the first five years of his married life the pair lived in one of the huts there, relics of Crimean days.

During her married life my mother kept a diary, a red leather volume that is most tiresomely laconic for anyone sixty years or so later wishing to study that period ; but even in her terse sentences we get an idea of the life led at that time at Aldershot by a soldier and his wife.

The contrast between Giffords' Hall and No. 2 Hut, K Lines, North Camp, was considerable. There was little luxury about these wooden bungalows with their tar painted felt roofs ; they were hot in summer and cold in winter. During one cold spell Elphinstone had even asked for sympathy from the Queen when telling her of frozen jugs and sponges and of how impossible it seemed to get the sitting-rooms above freezing-point.

Yet these huts had some quality that endeared them to their occupants ; ivy and virginia creeper quickly covered their dark walls and the indefatigable soldier and his wife made astonishing gardens in a short while from the thankless gravel.

The Elphinstones thought it worth while to make their wooden hut comfortable ; not merely did they put up curtains and lay carpets—any soldier's wife who is worth her salt will do this, however short the tenure of " quarters "—but from photographs taken of their rooms we see that the dining-room was panelled with oak that Elphinstone had bought from a scrap heap outside Beverley Minster when that church was undergoing some destructive renovation ; that the drawing-room mantelpiece was a fine piece of carved renaissance work and that the doors were made of old oak panelling. The rooms naturally were too full of furniture to suit the ideas of to-day ; it must have been difficult to move without knocking over some object or other. Yet the furniture was good, there were no bamboo whatnots and peacock feather fans that du Maurier shows us in the drawing-rooms of *Punch*. The music-stool was an Elizabethan cradle, full then, as now, with leather volumes of Chopin and the symphonies of Beethoven arranged as duets. On the walls hang Hispano Mauresque dishes, water-colours by Jacobi, Aaron Penley and

David Cox ; there is a Chippendale chair or two and some fine pieces of embroidery on sofas and cushions. And if on a table a painted royal photograph stands framed in fretted brass-work and plush—well, it was the gift of a friend.

The huts had little seclusion ; what few trees there were were still young and hardly screened the dusty parade grounds with their noise all day long of bugles and wheeled traffic. It was a very different Aldershot from that of to-day with its well-grown avenues and red-brick barracks. But if the outward difference was great the social difference was even greater. In the place of a large town of hard-working folk only knowing their own associates there was the leisurely atmosphere of a country village, friendly and sociable, dumped in a part of the world where the "County" was still a power. Seldom can a newly married couple have been more hospitably received. The big houses round about opened their doors to Sir Howard and his bride, showing their treasures to the newcomers and becoming the familiar haunts where a welcome was always certain. There was plenty of time in those days for quiet conversation seated on the long terrace at Bramshill, whose doors were then always hospitably open ; whose thousand panes of old glass set in stone mullions reflected the green of beech trees and fields in the valley below and whose treasures indoors gave a pleasant note of history and of quiet security. There was plenty of time for good dinners in that one-time fortress on the hill above Farnham, dinners followed by music, if not of professional yet of excellent quality, trio and quartets executed by competent musicians. Peper-Harow, whose owner, Lord Midleton, was a friend of Alfred Cole's, gave them hospitality ; the same conditions applied to Denbies, which looks across the valley of the Mole towards Box Hill. "To Up Park" is a frequent entry in the diary ; Miss Fetherstonhaugh, the owner, had a tender spot in her heart for Sir Howard, and my mother in after-years used laughingly to wonder what would have been the fate of the house after the old lady died had there been an Elphinstone son instead of merely daughters.

There was much visiting and entertaining, regimental balls and race meetings, dinners at the Pavilion or with fellow officers and their wives, royal functions in London. Though the life was gay my mother was a person of simple tastes who could enjoy other things besides gaiety. It was fun, certainly, to travel up to London and go to the Opera or to "H.M.S. 'Pinafore'" in a new creation fresh from the hands of "Madame Elise," well knowing

that the sapphire blue velvet showed off her Titian hair to perfection ; it was fun to dance through a court ball finding many friends in scarlet uniform or in old lace and diamonds. It was equally fun to take the pony-cart filled with little Jelf boys or with Mary Hare (the Mary Wyndham of Canadian days) and her children and with a picnic lunch or tea, spend the afternoon picking primroses in the woods of Loseley or Itchel Manor. What perhaps was still more enjoyable was to mount her little Arab horse and watch manœuvres or field days, galloping over the dusty Long Valley so well known to several generations of English soldiers. Later on there were long days spent in the saddle "in waiting" on Prince Arthur's bride. Or she would drive a pair of chestnuts in her phaeton to watch a march past of the troops, taking with her the wife of a fellow officer. The names Lort-Phillips, Belhaven, Hart Davies, Kerr, Wilfred Seymour and Hunter-Weston came frequently into the red diary. Another name is also often there, Ralph Anstruther of Balcaskie, whose folk had befriended Elphinstone thirty years before in Scotland and who in his turn was to befriend the next generation fifty years afterwards in Fife. At this time he lived as a bachelor in the next-door hut and he owned a dog ; a dog of character, haughty and proud, who refused to speak to his master's friends when meeting them on parade ground or at the mess ; but who, whenever his master left home for a few days, took possession of the next-door family as if temporarily his own—the Colonel, the Colonel's wife, baby and servants, claiming bed and board as his right for so doing. He was friendly and playful and guarded them against all intruders till the moment his real master returned, when he cut them dead as before.

Another name comes into the diary, that of Mrs. Ewing. This writer was the wife of a sapper and an old friend of Elphinstone, and knew intimately the soldiering life of those days. She depicted it for her children friends in *Mama's Birthday Review*, and in the *Story of a Short Life* those who knew Bramshill as well as Elphinstone could recognise two portraits in her descriptions of the old house and the young V.C. who played the violin there.

Before she married, my mother knew little of soldiers ; she was new to such things as "shirts" and "stables," and she found the duties of a Colonel's wife were many even though she was but 20 years of age. But she took the whole thing rather as a game—the toy house and the soldiers in their red coats, the drums and the

guns—and she enjoyed it all. She had to play at being adviser to the men's wives and families and discuss difficult problems with the matron of the women's hospital or with the padre. She had to entertain junior subalterns (probably older than herself) and visiting "swells" as she calls them in her letters. There were occasional hurried changes of plan; one day in May while they were entertaining a party at the Aldershot races they received a telegram summoning them to dine that evening at Buckingham Palace, and they were just able to catch a 4.50 train in time to dress for dinner with Her Majesty, Prince Arthur, Princess Louise and Lord Lorne, leaving their own guests to entertain themselves.

It may have been on this occasion that there occurred an episode known to us later as the story of "The Trousseau Chemise." After a hurried summons to Buckingham Palace my mother realised during the last moments of dressing that her maid had only packed a white chemise to be worn under a black dress. Dresses at that moment were laced all the way up the back and through each black eye-hole showed a spot of white chemise. No other dress was available, but you do not marry an artist for nothing. My father had his own rooms at Buckingham Palace and no true artist is ever far from his tools. A fine paint-brush, a bottle of Indian ink and a clever hand, and in a few moments disaster was turned to triumph. But there was no possibility of forgetting the event for the trousseau chemises of those days were things made of the finest lawn, real lace and exquisite stitching and Indian ink does not come out in the wash. The Buckingham Palace chemise with its double row of little dark spots lived to bring many a smile of recollection in after-years.

Her Majesty was extremely thoughtful about commanding Elphinstone's presence in these days of early married life.

She wrote :

WINDSOR CASTLE, 6 *March*, 1877.

" . . . Perhaps Sir Howard could drive over from Aldershot on Sunday D.V. to see the Queen about $\frac{1}{4}$ to 3 as she does not like to take him away for longer from Lady Elphinstone after his repeated absences. . . ."

In the middle of September 1877 came an interlude for my mother in the routine of work and gaiety and in October Her Majesty wrote :

BALMORAL, *October 14th, 1877.*

"The Queen has to thank—somewhat tardily—Sir Howard Elphinstone for his letters of the 18th August and 16th September. She rejoices to hear of the well-being of Lady Elphinstone and her future godchild—tho' she fears the former cannot have recovered rapidly if she were only to be carried into the next room a week ago. A fortnight is the usual time to *begin* to sit up and walk about. . . .

. . . The Queen's christening gift will follow shortly."

The Queen's christening gift was a gold mug, joining an already large array of plate presented at one time or another by the Queen ; her wedding present had been five gold fruit dishes, four of which were circular to surround a large central oval piece. In fact, thanking letters alternated regularly with those referring to anniversaries. Some dealt with gifts such as a copy of an old Irish chalice or a silver-gilt dish and ewer ; others thanked for prints and photographs of members of the royal family and for portraits of the Queen ; sometimes she was shown seated outside a window at Balmoral, a background that was a favourite one with her highland photographer, and in one she is seen mounted on a small pony with John Brown standing at its head and some official letters and boxes lying on the ground.

"It is beautifully engraved and the likeness of herself (rather a portly elderly lady) and her good faithful attendant and friend are both she thinks *very* good."

CHAPTER XXIX : FAMILY LIFE

THE last thirteen years of Elphinstone's life were the busiest and also the happiest. Apart from the matter of age, he and his wife were ideally suited to each other. She was not a spoilt only child who needed always to be in the centre of the picture, but on the contrary had been drilled by several elder brothers and sisters to play a minor part and to enjoy whatever came along. Physically she was Elphinstone's superior, capable of standing up to tiring periods of "in waiting," nor did she flag at the end of strenuous days in the saddle following military

exercises. If she had little creative power of her own yet she had appreciation of it in others. She was enough of a musician to accompany his violin with pleasure to others as well as herself; enough of a craftswoman to help him in whatever decorative work he had on hand. She had a serene temper which refused to be ruffled at inconvenience; she had a cool head in emergencies; her generous mind delighted in finding ideal presents for others. She could however be tactless, and when a sister-in-law older than her mother came to inspect a new and extremely badly behaved baby her excuse was: "Oh, I am so sorry, but you see the child is only accustomed to seeing *young* aunts." On this question of his family she was not the perfect wife; except for Nicolai's daughters, of whom she grew very fond, she found little in common with Elphinstone's people and he drifted even further away from his family than ever.

If he saw little of his own folk he found a congenial life with her people, and his marriage opened to him a side of England that till then he had only known as an occasional visitor, that of a country estate. This proved helpful to him in his dealings with Bagshot Park, the future home of the Duke of Connaught.

His wife's father, William Cole, came from a family who had long farmed their own land in Norfolk, land which they still own to-day. There is many a "John Cole, gentleman," who lies under a grey tombstone in the churchyard of Pulham St. Mary Magdalene. The White House is a farm of no pretensions, yet it held in it crested silver and fine lace to hand on to the coming generation. William Cole, however, much as he loved the land, cast longing eyes towards London. In those days of expansion in trade money came to him quickly, not by manufacture but largely as English agent for a new precious American drug, quinine; so that when at the age of 30 as a bearded widower, he met at a ball a lovely child of 16 whose father was Alfred Brooks with an imaginary partner named Justerini, there was no want of money to stand in the way of their marriage. A house in Portland Place alternated with Giffords' Hall in Suffolk as the background to my mother's life and not long after her marriage West Woodhay, near Newbury, took the place of Giffords'.

It was not an elderly household into which Elphinstone married, for William Cole was but ten years his senior and Jane Cole was four years younger than her son-in-law. She was delicate, good looking and essentially a 'grande dame'; she was a connoisseur and collector of lace embroideries and porcelain and she had an

irresistible and irrepressible sense of humour. She was the pivot of everything at West Woodhay, and to her grandchildren she became the most delightful and adored companion.

The Coles themselves were essentially English ; good-tempered common sense ran strongly through the family ; they also shared a high level of good looks, but their characters varied considerably.

Jessie, the eldest daughter, was mathematical and creative. She was architect for the estate and built the cottages and the schools, the laundry and the men's club, putting into these simple buildings a dignity of good planning, proportions, and materials far better than usual at that period. She had however a curiously timid side to her nature ; she was frightened of men and of the sea, and though she loved to travel she seldom ventured away from the beaten track of Europe. With a friend and one or other of her nieces as companions, her short figure in its well-tailored clothes, with a fat bundle of Cook's tickets and £5 in notes and a slim ivory foot rule, would wander from Brussels to Lucerne and from Lucerne to Florence and Assisi, noting the architectural details with the mind of a professional and making puns and enjoying the ices of foreign restaurants with the delight of a child.

The youngest sister Edith had neither the sense of humour nor the creative powers of her sister, yet she had greater independence of action and her travelling was never done through Messrs. Thomas Cook & Co. For twenty summers a valley in Norway knew her well ; South Africa, Tripoli, India and Constantinople had seen her as a visitor, and a scorpion of Somaliland (a scorpion was the Cole crest, funnily enough) which was hitherto unknown was found by her and named after her.

Alfred, the second son, inherited not only his father's business but also his business capacities, which led him eventually to become Governor of the Bank of England. He was a man with many friends who did not shirk speaking his mind when occasion demanded it ; he and his mother were completely but undemonstratively devoted to each other.

It remained for Willie, the eldest son, to bring an alien element into the family. Himself a quiet, good-tempered cavalryman, he married a girl from County Galway. She was not merely good looking but had a startling irresistible beauty that did not fade but seemed to increase with age. Fifty years after her marriage at her daughter Mrs. Neville Chamberlain's large political "at homes" in London there was never a woman who could compare with her in looks. Her tall upright figure was still that of a girl,

her Irish eyes had lost none of their fire ; her shining white hair was swept in heavy waves away from her beautiful features and her voice still had its haunting charm. She was emotional and imaginative, and a real good row was to her the very salt of life ; it was as difficult for her to understand the placid English temperament as for the Coles to understand this adorable and exasperating creature from the unpunctual, unpractical West. One story is told of her when several years after her marriage she was the proud mother of a son and daughter. At one of the formal West Woodhay dinner-parties before a hunt ball her neighbour turned to her with the cheerful words, " Well, Mrs. Willie, been having any good days lately out hunting ? " Aunt Mary looked at him as one suddenly bereaved ; two tears, the forerunners of a cloudburst, stole down her cheeks as she answered, " Hunting ? *Hunting !* How can I hunt when I've been having all these beastly babies ! " Whereupon the storm broke and she fled from the room to be seen no more that night.

The names in the visitors' book show that at those large shooting parties that were the passion of the Cole menfolk the quality of conversation was not likely to be poor when it so often included people like Lionel Cust, Francis Jenkinson, Gerald Balfour, George Longman, Edward and Alfred Lyttelton and Ivo Bligh. No doubt those Victorian dinners were lengthy, but they were not dull.

Looking back at life at West Woodhay, I think that consideration for others was the dominant note ; luxurious, unhurried and kindly, it was typical of much of England that has now passed. If it held high standards of comfort it also held high standards of other things of far greater value.

Elphinstone thoroughly enjoyed his " in-laws " but he enjoyed his children even more. They were brought up with French and German nurses, so that they, like himself, should not be limited to one language. Often in the evenings when they were in bed he would take his violin up to the nursery and play to them old folk songs and light classics—the entrance of that slight figure with hazel eyes lighting up a smile bringing infinite pleasure. As they grew older he found time to give them violin lessons before breakfast in his dressing-room. Sometimes he would be seen at West Woodhay pushing a pram, a most unorthodox proceeding in those days that raised the eyebrows of the country folk. Often the children would be packed comfortably into the hood of the phaeton and taken for drives and expeditions ; lifted once into the

immense helmet of the Duke of Wellington's statue as it lay on the ground during its journey from Hyde Park Corner to Aldershot. Sometimes Elphinstone would design clothes to be made in Paris, giving coats an unusual Russian cut to be worn with Astrakan caps.

Certainly the children were not relegated to the background, but played their part occasionally at some grown-up function or other, even at times acting as hostess. Of the hospitality Aldershot they tell a story of the German Crown Prince—magnificent figure in white uniform—courteously requesting permission from a small girl after lunch to put his coffee-cup down upon *her* table in *her* hut ; of a very tall young cavalryman, known much against Her Majesty's wishes as "Prince Eddy," throwing a still smaller girl up into the air and catching her again, and of the agonised mixture of fear and delight that this entailed. One vivid recollection remains of Queen Victoria's Jubilee of 1887. The stand from which the Household viewed the procession was in the courtyard of Buckingham Palace, as Her Majesty wished that the first cheer she heard should be from children. Just before the start when everyone was keyed up with expectancy, Elphinstone, who was to ride in the procession, came over on his chestnut mare to the stand to see if his family were all right with their aunt, their mother being in the Abbey ; it was an unforgettable moment of pride for them.

To him his daughters were to be an increasing joy the older they grew ; to them he was a wonder and a delight, the recollection of which could never fade.

CHAPTER XXX : IRISH IMPRESSIONS

SHORTLY after his marriage, Elphinstone had often to be away from Aldershot—either in Ireland in attendance on the Prince, who was commanding a battalion of the Rifle Brigade in Dublin, or else touring the country inspecting Depot centres.

Though his absence usually lasted only a few days at a time it led to a command from Her Majesty :

" . . . The Queen must ask Sir Howard to telegraph to her when he leaves Aldershot for a day or two as she frequently has

been unable to get answers to questions from his *not* being there, and it *might* cause serious delay sometimes. . . .”

His apologies were sincere, but the command was not always easy to obey, and the following year when she writes on the subject again : “. . . Sir Howard promised last year to let the Queen always know when he *left* Aldershot, but he did not do so this time . . .” he gives her the difficulties :

26 July, '77.

“. . . He regrets extremely that he left Aldershot without informing Your Majesty and begs most humbly to apologise. The duty he is engaged upon is to report on all the ‘Depot Centres’ of the army, and as they are all over the Kingdom he is frequently obliged to move about, although he never goes for more than three days from Aldershot. The last excursion to Scotland was the only one which he extended for six days and during the next month he will probably have to proceed to Ireland for 10 days.

The length of time this (visiting the Depot Centres) will take is rather uncertain as he is not sure about the Irish trains, all of which are very slow. . . . His visit will include Naas, Galway, Athlone, Tralee, Clonmell, Downpatrick, Armagh, and Omagh ; consequently places scattered all over Ireland and the communication between which is very difficult. . . .”

Three weeks later, on 18th August, 1877, he writes from Belfast :

“. . . Your Gracious letter of the 11th has only just reached him, chiefly owing to the dilatory manner in which things are done in the South of Ireland. He could hardly have believed that laziness and apathy could be carried to such an extent. Fortunately there is a Scotch element in the northern part which stimulates to exertion and renders the difference between it and the south greater every year.”

There was no natural sympathy between him and the Irish or even any admiration of the scenery. Perhaps those dilatory trains had something to do with this attitude, for he writes to his wife from Limerick :

“We have again had a day of waiting at stations. Four hours at Limerick junction ! . . . The country is flat with distant blue hills ; close by it is intersected with numberless useless fences and drains and is wretchedly looked after. Weeds predominate. . . .

Queer people these Irish are, a mixture of childishness with all the cruelty and hardness of childhood."

An incident of the childishness with no trace of cruelty except for musical ears he reports to the Queen from Dublin :

"Yesterday's ceremony passed off very well indeed and the Castle was crowded. The band closed the proceedings by playing at one and the same time God save the Queen and St. Patrick's Day!!! Strange mixture of sound!!!"

CHAPTER XXXI : PRINCE ARTHUR'S ENGAGEMENT

IN February 1878 Prince Arthur, unaccompanied by Elphinstone who was on leave in Italy, went to Berlin to attend a double wedding, that of the Crown Princess's eldest daughter Charlotte to Prince Bernhard of Saxe-Meiningen—the boy who years before had stayed at the Rosenau—and also of a daughter of Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia to the Grand Duke of Oldenburg. A problem which had exercised various Courts of Europe for eight years was now solved in a few days. A letter from the Crown Princess to Queen Victoria tells how in her busy absorption about her daughter's marriage she did not notice what was happening till the Prince of Wales pointed out to her how engrossed in each other's company were Prince Arthur and Princess Louise Margaret, the youngest daughter of Prince Frederick Charles. There were no doubts in the young couple's minds, though it was impossible to arrange another immediate meeting. So Elphinstone went to Berlin early in May to make arrangements for the formal announcement of the engagement.

There were a number of minor difficulties. Prince Arthur could not again get leave from his battalion ; Prince Frederick Charles's character was not an easy one ; thanks to German etiquette simple things became complicated. Prince Arthur wrote to the Queen : " I don't know what I should have done without Sir Howard." She in turn wrote to Elphinstone : " The Eastern question is *not* more difficult than is this one to settle. . . . It is all *very* worrying." At Berlin, however, both

these problems were settled that summer by Disraeli and by Elphinstone, respectively. On arrival in Germany the latter wrote to his wife :

HOTEL DE RUSSIE, BERLIN,

May 8, 1878.

" This morning I was up at 8, and dressed in full regimentals and breakfasted by 9. Then came the official calls. First to the Crown Prince who was away.

The Emperor was at home and received me at once. A splendid looking old man, as straight as possible and looking in splendid health and spirits with plenty of fresh colour in his cheeks, and sparkling eyes. He is getting on to 83. He is delighted with the proposed marriage.

Prince Frederick Charles is likewise away. No one knows positively when the Princess returns from Italy. So this forces me to stay on, doing nothing all this time. It is a great nuisance, but cannot possibly be helped.

I wish you were within reach. You can fancy it is not a lively time here in the Hotel by oneself in a constant state of change of costume, full dress, plain clothes, evening clothes, etc. . . ."

Elphinstone already knew Lord Odo Russell, the British Ambassador, who shortly became Lord Ampthill. Some ten years earlier he had written of " an agreeable passage and railway journey which Mr. Odo Russell succeeded in making very interesting." During the months following Prince Arthur's engagement the hospitality at the Embassy made a great difference to Elphinstone's visits to Berlin. He writes of the first of many dinners there :

" . . . I have just come from dining with our Ambassador, Lord Odo Russell ; both he and she are very nice and clever. She was Lord Clarendon's daughter and he was at Rome for a long time, before it became the capital, and made there a great name for tact, judgment and quick wit and repartee.

They tell me that the Princess is not pretty, but very nice and amiable. She appears dreadfully shy even in speaking to people, but is clever, fond of reading and drawing, and decidedly English in her predilection. I am told that she has a charming manner, and one which wins people, and that altogether it is a fine character. I trust, therefore, that they will get on well together and be happy.

I shall certainly be delighted to see him so.

Our dinner at the Ambassador's was very small, including no one but his wife, himself and me. But there was lots of conversation and I did not assume my usual silent mood."

To Her Majesty, Elphinstone wrote :

8th May.

"Lord Odo Russell considers that the majority of people seem very pleased that the marriage is to take place in England and that they would prefer it to be there than here at Berlin. . . .

Sir Howard is very glad that he came over to explain things fully. He has, moreover, been very careful to observe strictly the multifarious etiquettes of duty so necessary here. . . .

His interview with Prince Frederick Charles was very satisfactory. . . . It is quite evident that the official request for his daughter's hand was most pleasing to him. Sir Howard never before saw so truly joyful an expression on his face. . . .

It is very satisfactory that the Emperor has twice told Sir Howard that for his own part he quite approves of the marriage taking place in England, as this will give the key-note to others' opinions and silence any remarks that may be made to the contrary. . . . Sir Howard cannot close this letter without saying how particularly kind has been the Crown Prince. He not only offered to be of any assistance but in so many little ways has smoothed over matters which evidently required it. Nothing could have been nicer. . . ."

To his wife he wrote :

May 11th.

"Yesterday the little Princess Charlotte showed me over her little villa at Potsdam. It was very prettily furnished, delicate colours, especially her bedroom with pale salmon-pink repp curtains and pink paper (imitation tiles) panels, quite new, which matched in colour.

Her great favourite is the young Princess now betrothed to Prince Arthur, and she told me much about her and how good she is. I need not tell you how delighted I was. . . ."

On being introduced to the future Duchess of Connaught, Elphinstone wrote to his wife :

12 May.

"I have just returned from paying my respects to Princess Frederick Charles. They received me very graciously and I

presented my letters and was introduced to the one Prince Arthur has selected.

She is tall, slight, and rather distinguée figure, carries herself well. . . . There is something very sweet and pleasing about her which wins people. She has a gentle and taking manner, and one feels sure that one can trust her implicitly. I should call hers a decidedly high-minded, upright, truthful character, one that would prove strong whatever might occur, full of deep honest affection and good feeling, with tact and firmness. So it is altogether a character one cannot but like and I sincerely trust and hope they will be happy.

It is arranged that they are to come over about 24th June, and if it is really settled that you are to be one of the ladies, very likely you will have to make her acquaintance. What a pity we did not meet them in Italy. . . . I shall be so glad to be back I assure you. I am thoroughly wearied out with this life."

Into the intricacies of these "wheels within wheels which seem to be at work" came a bombshell, or more literally, the report of a revolver; while the Emperor was driving through the streets of Berlin an attempt was made upon his life. "The bullet appeared to have gone nowhere near the Emperor. It created a great sensation. . . . The feeling universally expressed by all classes shows how greatly he is beloved and admired."

To his wife Elphinstone wrote:

"You will have seen in the papers what a dastardly attempt was made upon the Emperor's life. He was driving alone with his daughter and did not himself see the man. She, however, saw him take aim and was all the more alarmed. Both, however, were as calm as possible and appeared at dinner an hour afterwards."

In June, during the Congress at Berlin, Elphinstone returned to Germany, this time with Prince Arthur to Glienicke, the home of Princess Louise Margaret. Modern plumbing had as yet no place in German palaces and he wrote home:

". . . The Schloss is about 2 miles out of Potsdam, prettily situated, close to the little lake of Babelsberg. Prince Arthur is in a little cottage close by (overlooking the lake) as the etiquette would not permit of his living in the same house as his future wife!

Such strange people these Germans; even here, such a thing

as a 'tub' is not to be had, they tell me that the only one they have sent over to the Prince's cottage but that they will send to Berlin tomorrow for one for me. No soap either.

I presume fine air answers all purposes. . . ."

As usual Elphinstone wrote home twice a day and we hear of various subjects—of the hours of meals :—no breakfast, lunch at 12, dinner at 5, and tea at 8.30. At Babelsberg the Emperor's country place, the grass lawns were "kept green by being watered twice or thrice daily. As the Park is over 1000 acres you can fancy the labour of doing this. . . . This morning we again went for a ride at 8 a.m. through the forest of fir wood. The air was splendid and as it is all sandy soil one can ride anywhere, you would have liked it immensely. The Princess is very fond of riding and sits well. The more I see of her the more I like her. She ought to make him happy. . . ." He adds : "Strange people these Germans ; half the time of the men is spent dressing and undressing."

On June 1st there was a second attempt on the life of the Emperor. At first it was thought that he had been killed by the shot fired at him while he was driving back from the Tiergarten. The Crown Prince and Princess were in England and on their hurried return they found that the Emperor had rallied, and had signed a decree nominating the Crown Prince as temporary Regent. The marvellous vitality of the old man eventually brought him back to health and to nearly ten more years of life.

Prince Arthur wrote to his mother :

"The Emperor is going on very well. . . . His Palace is in a sort of state of siege ; all the front is kept clear by a cordon of police and the front door is barred and we had to drive in at a back entrance at which were posted several sentries. . . . At the station I saw several policemen with revolvers. . . . I am afraid if the Emperor recovers he will *never* be himself again."

To his wife Elphinstone wrote :

". . . The Crown Princess asked very kindly after you and the baby. She tells me that the state of feeling is not nice and that even she herself has received several threatening letters that if she appeared in public she would be shot. It is really too bad. Fortunately she has too much pluck to care about this ; still such threats tell upon the nervous system."

Before leaving Berlin Elphinstone wrote to the Queen :

17 June 1878.

"Your Majesty will be pleased to hear that Lord Beaconsfield appears far stronger and better than when he first came. His masterly speech appears to have created a great sensation and he is immensely looked up to by all the diplomatic circle in Berlin.

None but excellent news continues to arrive about the Emperor.

Sir Howard begs to apologise for not writing on black-edged paper, but there is none to be had here unfortunately.

He is much gratified by Your Majesty's approval of his rough sketches."

In August the two men were back again in Germany as the guests of the Crown Prince and Princess at the Neues Palais at Potsdam. Elphinstone was no stranger to the Crown Princess. It was nearly twenty years since they had met. He had helped her at times in various ways, enquiring about houses she might rent in England or sending her details of the sale of antiques. In the autumn of 1875 she had asked for help more confidential :

"... There is a strange feeling of dislike and distrust prevalent at Windsor in the highest quarters. . . . Somebody has been interpreting simple facts in a very mischievous way. We cannot quite afford that as I fear we are not over popular at Home ! I trust to your wisdom and discretion in this delicate matter, that is, SHOULD *you* ever be in the way of dispelling this impression in high quarters I hope you will try, as it will be a great thing for me ! . . . Your kindness at Potsdam *emboldened* me to write this. There is always *some* mischief being made between this House and Windsor and *I* am the sufferer and NEVER *there* to defend myself or explain things as you know !"

During this visit in the autumn of 1878 the pleasant acquaintanceship between Elphinstone and his hosts ripened into friendship. There was time for that absorbing topic, art. He wrote to his wife :

30 Aug. 1878 NEUES PALAIS, POTSDAM.

"... I have spent another long day with the Crown Princess in looking over picture galleries. What quiet perception and excellent taste she has, yet in "dressing" her taste is not good. It is far too artistic and dramatic. . . . To-day I have been amusing myself beginning an "interior" of the Palace. It

contains most beautiful rooms and a great many of them. They are all highly decorated in the Louis XV style with rich gild-floral decorations on walls and ceilings with silk tapestries. Some of the rooms are in this style finer than any in France or elsewhere.

The room I am doing is a small library used by Frederick the Great, and containing many of the works of Voltaire. If I have time I will do a careful drawing of it. Princess Royal was quite right, when I spoke to her about Venice, to say "You ought not to attempt so many sketches; far better spend 3 weeks at a drawing and do your best." Unfortunately I have not the chance of doing that; one's movements are too rapid. Still I must try in drawing from nature to be more careful and to spend the time at the same drawing. The one I am beginning now I shall try to finish pretty fairly."

The colouring of this sketch, here illustrated, is in soft yellows and greens, and the Crown Princess added the figure of Elphinstone at work.

A week later :

" . . . I confess my stay here has been very pleasant altogether, entirely due however to the Crown Princess. . . . She has been most kind, and put herself out to oblige one. Her object has been to make one feel welcome and that is a very pleasant feeling more especially when coming from one in her position. Another reason has been that seeing so much artistic taste and talk, I felt much interested. Seeing the Princess paint has made me long to imitate her and to have a couple of hours daily. However, I have not been idle, as I bring home with me three fairly finished Water Colours.

I never would have attempted these had not Count Seckendorff been here drawing himself. All these things have made me like my stay and I feel grateful to the people here, more especially as I bring home something to show you. . . .

The Princess Royal has kindly promised to paint a picture for us, for our dining room in the future house. Here is a beginning therefore of a new establishment. She several times said that she should like to dress you up as a Puritan, or North German peasant girl, and draw your picture, as those dresses would suit you to perfection, and make such a pretty picture.

Next time I come here she hoped it would be with you and baby.

All this is very nice because it *is* all meant. . . ."



In the Neues Palais, Potsdam
From a sketch by Sir Howard Elphinstone, the figure of Sir Howard by the
Empress Frederick



H.I.M. The Empress Frederick
(Victoria Crown Princess and Princess Royal)

A fortnight after this he wrote :

" . . . I have been at Glienicke all the morning, dined there at 3, and since then the Crown Princess has been taking me round sight-seeing to Sans-Souci, Charlottenberg and Charlottenhof. She is determined to do her utmost to please me, and certainly it is most kind of her to lionise me in this way. . . ."

Of a regimental inspection at the Neues Palais he wrote :

" We have just returned from the festivities. The Divine Service was by no means impressive. With us in England it is particularly so ; but here there is no religious feeling, and one can see that it is a duty ceremonial and nothing else."

To the Queen he wrote long detailed accounts of the wedding of Prince Arthur's future sister-in-law, with comments upon the lack of religious feeling : " very different indeed to our magnificent service full of religious feeling and grandeur." On this last subject he wrote home :

" This church question is the worst feature in Germany. I myself believe it is at the root of the socialistic movement. From what one hears, religion hardly exists. It is a duty prescribed, but few are for it ; hardly any believe in it. If you speak to them, you find many even doubt a future. How can a nation progress when religion, and therefore the highest motives, are scoffed at. What a pity it is, for there are so many fine qualities in the nation."

CHAPTER XXXII : BERLIN, 1879

EXCEPT in Russia, European travelling in 1879 was devoid of luxury. There were no corridor carriages or through trains for distant journeys. Electric light was not thought of for railway coaches, nor were there dining-cars, sleepers or lavatories. A tepid cup of soup, snatched among a crowd of hurried people at a wayside station, was often all the food a traveller could get on a long journey. There were moments also when it must have been difficult to keep a straight face, for when royal ladies shyly requested that the train should stop at some station all the coaches

were liable to be shunted back and forth for several minutes on arrival, to make sure that the royal saloon should be drawn up exactly opposite a red carpet flanked by two lines of bowing officials leading from the door of the carriage to that of the compartment labelled "Dames."

The journey from Berlin to Calais was far from comfortable. Either at Aix-la-Chapelle or Brussels it was necessary to change trains, frequently in the middle of the night. On one occasion a scribbled pencil note tells us from Brussels at 4.30 a.m.

"This is a dreadful hour to arrive at and be turned out of your carriage for 2½ hours. However, although fast asleep I had a wash which is something."

On the journey to Berlin in June 1878 Elphinstone writes :

En route to Aix-la-Chapelle.

"You never saw such confusion as last night ; the crowds of visitors to Paris necessitated 2 trains, and delayed ours so much that we could not go beyond Lille. There we waited from 3 a.m. till nearly six, and we are in consequence no less than 7 hours behind time. Instead of arriving at Berlin tonight we shall not do so till tomorrow morning at 7. A great nuisance."

On arrival he continued :

"Most certainly we have had a tiring journey. The confusion at Calais was amusing, but for the consequences, for my especial portmanteau into which I had placed all the things which would be wanted at once has gone astray ; so here I am unable to appear in proper costume which to a German is horrible, showing want of respect, etc.

At Potsdam we arrived at 7 this morning and found the Royalties waiting at the station in Full dress uniform, a strange contrast to our soiled shooting costume and dirty state."

If travel had disadvantages during the summer months these were nothing compared to the discomfort during cold weather. Even an English prince could command no such necessities as warmth or sufficient food. Writing from the Schloss in Berlin on January 7th, 1879, Elphinstone says :

"We reached Berlin about ½ an hour late, most unusual in Royal trains in Germany, and were received at the Station by the Crown Prince and Prince F. Charles with Lord Odo Russell and

the Embassy, and then came straight on here, very glad indeed to get warmth and food.

I don't recollect a colder journey. The compartment, in itself most comfortable, could not be attached to the German heating system, and the cold was intense, notwithstanding fur bag, fur coat, foot warmer and the Ulster thrown over all. I presume likewise that sitting still for so many hours with little food intensified the feeling of cold; for we had some coffee at Aachen and nothing after that till 4 p.m. some hasty dinner."

There followed after this journey three weeks at the huge Schloss in Berlin. Elphinstone wrote home of his quarters there; he had two large rooms furnished in carved walnut but which were terribly stuffy, being heated with stoves, while the passages were scented with pastilles to counteract the effect of lack of air. "Fancy one's bedroom with a stove heat of 65° all night long. When I can I open the double windows but they are soon shut again." It was a boring life, paying official calls in full dress and answering letters. "I wish I were back at home. The greater part of the day one is shut up by oneself in these rooms for there is no pleasure in walking out of doors in the snow. . . . It is fearfully dull work having your dinner every evening by yourself at 5 p.m. and pass the evening alone. . . . Dinner is a solitary affair at an adjoining table, so I can write in between. Servants don't wait but come in when rung for. One general dinner is cooked somewhere or other in this huge palace and then at 5 p.m. portions are sent up to different people living here. I enclose my yesterday's bill of fare. The ground rice pudding was an excellent dish to copy, cooked in a small round shape and browned with burnt sugar surrounded with currant jelly."

The weather was bitter; the days sunless and dark. Although the windows were large it was impossible to read unless sitting close to them. He tried to copy a water-colour in his spare time but it was not work he liked and proved a failure. At his wife's request he was photographed in uniform and on seeing the proofs he wrote "they seem very good bringing out my wrinkles well." He writes: "Never did I see such a place. Not a shop that contains a thing of taste or that one would care about. The ornaments are simply hideous or vulgar. I have not seen a single thing that I should like to bring back as a present for you. The only things worth looking at are their photos of modern pictures. These are really good.

In the afternoon I went to an exhibition of pictures but nothing worth looking at. The colouring was dreadful. . . . In taste the German is certainly deficient ; it is crude and hard with none of the richness of the French or even of the English.

Here at length has one week elapsed ! To me it seems ages. . . . Thank goodness it will be the last time that I shall ever come here, for it is a most dreary place at this season. I know a fair number of people here, but not one whom one cares for. Their habits, their thoughts, their manners are so different that one cannot possibly care to become intimate. . . .

Here at all events, marriage does not bring much more than sober lives. The "love" part cools down very soon. The people I dined with the other day are an instance. They have been married only $1\frac{1}{4}$ year and yet when we were dining together he snubbed her so outrageously 2 or 3 times I was quite surprised ; not in a chaffy way, for a German does not understand that.

That reminds me that several ' savants ' the other night admired the humour of *Punch*. The curious part they said was that in the humour there is nothing sarcastic ; it is all so quiet and natural, ' now with us,' they said, ' real wit is always sarcastic and biting.' How little idea they have what wit is. They are too serious and probably too vain to enter into it."

A growing dislike of Berlin and its inhabitants creeps into his letters. " My stay here is a wretched one. I hate the place. . . . There is no chance of my staying willingly a day longer than I can help." Even the opera was poor ; the prima donna sang out of tune and :

" I cannot say much for the performance. . . . The orchestra was wretched. In fact the great amount of brass and few string instruments gave it a dreadful harshness. Surprising that it should be so, for Germans are fond of music. It appears however that here the military element swallows up everything. The brass instruments are necessary for the march and therefore prevail everywhere. The old Emperor was there as usual. He likes a box close to the stage, so that he can see the faces of the actors clearly, and there sits hid behind a pillar to be screened from sight. He attends the play as regularly as possible every evening. Custom I suppose. How few people in England would do that at his age !

Lord Odo Russell has been very civil ; he is a most able representative. Certainly the best we have. He is immensely popular

and entertains a good deal. But of course now, on account of Court mourning,¹ everything is quiet. Besides she is expecting No. 7!! This evening I was to have dined at the Embassy and was looking forward at last to English ways and English people, but a message came about 2 that I should go to the Emperor this evening at 8.30. I believe it is a case of taking tea, which to me is so dreadful. However nothing else to be done. . . .”

BERLIN, 24 Jan. *Friday morning.*

“Last night we found a larger party at the Emperor’s than I expected. Besides the Empress, there were the Princess Louise, 4 ladies and numerous men. Of course all the latter in full uniform. We first sat down at little round tables, and cups of tea were handed to us, then these were cleared away and Professor Hofman gave us a chemical lecture. It was rather good, but too long I thought unfortunately. We then again sat down to the small tables and continued our supper, consisting of pâté de foie gras on bread, oranges and ices. I need not tell you that I did *not* take of this wholesome mixture. The Emperor was looking wonderfully well and as cheerful as possible.”

The Crown Princess had been laid up with a severe cold, but on her recovery Elphinstone writes of a visit paid to her at her Schloss in Berlin :

“I went upstairs, and in her usual kind way she received me with a thousand apologies for keeping me waiting ; then showed me over her museum. A rich collector, dying without heirs about 3 years ago, left her the entire collection he had gathered, a most valuable gift, and she has since added to it considerably putting by so much annually for purchases. They are arranged in 6 moderate-sized rooms and contains old plate with tankards, goblets, salvers, ornaments, etc. ; a large collection of old glass and crystal ; numerous miniatures and enamels, ironwork, a few paintings and tapestries and old furniture of all periods.

It is really a very handsome collection, and kept in perfect order, etc. etc. The fact of collecting them has given her an extraordinary knowledge of such matters, for she has an enquiring mind and a wonderful memory, consequently learns from the best sources, and never forgets the knowledge there gained. . . . She has finished the picture for the hall at Bagshot and very clever

¹ For the death of Princess Alice, Grand Duchess of Hesse.

indeed it is. She made many enquiries after you and the new baby and sent most kind messages.

. . . After various interviews the length of my stay here has now been decided, and I am sorry to say that I see no other course left but to remain here as long as Prince Arthur does. If I go before, there is no one to replace me ; and such a number of little things have to be settled, as regards the various presents that have to be given and selected, etc., that I could not get away before without omitting my duties. . . .

Last night the Crown Princess consulted with me as regards the various presents to be given in England on the occasion of the marriage. Strange, that all the expenses of these marriages are paid out of the Privy purse of the Emperor, so that even the smallest present which has to be given must be first submitted for approval to the head of the Emperor's establishment. Great delay is consequently occurring and I need not tell you what bother."

Eventually the Crown Princess and Sir Howard did all the choosing of presents between them, and the gifts were indeed selected by connoisseurs—bracelets, tie-pins, brooches, copies of antique silver cups, etc., and the initials of the Bride and Bridegroom twisted into monograms made of sapphires and rubies, pearls and diamonds.

On January 22 he wrote :

" . . . Last night it was a regular family dinner at the Crown Prince's. No one being there but the children. Afterwards we went into the schoolroom, which she does regularly every evening, she taking her work, and the children sitting down and doing some needlework.

We spoke a good deal about pictures in the room, and the Crown Prince was full of it. He appeared most anxious to have prints of historical events, so that the children would learn of the faces and names of the people but likewise the costumes of the period. I think he is quite right, and should even go further and get photos of prints of famous pictures or buildings to accustom the idea of beauty of form and colour. . . ."

Two days later :

" . . . For a short time I went to the Crown Princess, and saw her drawing another huge skeleton figure. This time the side view, to obtain correct knowledge of the muscles. She is most

patient in her work and her memory is wonderful, this drawing will prove of the utmost use to her. . . .

She spoke in a most disparaging tone of the German people. There is no one of whom she could make a friend and she feared that she was generally unpopular in consequence of the free thinking tone she took up. There is no doubt the society here is made up of very small 'sets.' Each set is quite exclusive, and will not even look at the other. The aristocracy as such is not to my liking, being very vain, small minded and decidedly dull. Of politics they are afraid to talk, of art and literature they know little. Consequently bitter tittle-tattle is their element, in which they excel."

Much has been written of the harm done by the Crown Princess ; it would surely have needed someone superhuman not to have made mistakes. She was but a few weeks over 17 when she married and was intelligent, straightforward and generous ; she came to a Court where such qualities were little understood. She suffered many things in silence and if at times under overwhelming provocation she said things best left unspoken, it is hard to blame her. She told my mother she had found it difficult to forgive that the time when her son lay dying the Emperor and Empress insisted that she must attend every Court function, though they knew the boy's hours were numbered. Hers was one of the earliest encounters between the British and the Prussian outlook ; Bismarck, using her good qualities for her undoing, succeeded not only in defeating her but in blackening her memory for nearly half a century. To-day we realise that it is not easy for anyone brought up in the freedom of England, surrounded by people kindly and honest, to submit in silence to Prussian tyranny. The Prussian character does not alter.

CHAPTER XXXIII : PRINCE ARTHUR'S WEDDING

THE deep mourning for the death three months earlier of the Grand Duchess of Hesse was lifted for her brother's marriage to Princess Louise Margaret on March 13th, 1879, at St. George's Chapel, Windsor.

The larger part of one volume of confidential family letters is given up to papers dealing with the wedding. In it we find the acceptances of ducal parents that their daughters should have the honour of being bridesmaid ; the complicated questions of precedence of English Princesses married to foreigners and who must take their correct position in the procession ; names of guests invited, etc. etc. Among these letters is a note in Her Majesty's writing about the foreign royalties expected ; at the side of a careful list are comments against the names such as these :

" Prince and Princess Henry of the Netherlands ; *He* died in January.

The Grand Duke of Hesse cannot come. (*She can't* of course come). . . ."

Elphinstone was at Windsor for some days beforehand. There was much to be discussed with Her Majesty not only concerning the ceremony and the future household of the young couple, but the Queen still seemed to look upon Elphinstone as a nurse to her beloved child and her notes are full of concern as to his health and advice as to homely remedies :

" Dear Arthur is looking very ill and altogether *not* well. He must be looked after and *dosed* for he is yellow and green. He has been much, *very much* worried and tried and he wants rest and quiet. Sir Howard must back him up well."

Though he was busy with every kind of arrangement, working often till the small hours before he had finished, yet he managed to find time for the usual letters twice a day to his wife who was at Aldershot. These letters were liable to interruption in the middle of a sentence. He tells her of the reception of the Irish deputation who brought with them a silver-gilt gift, five foot high, once a show piece at the Great Exhibition of 1851 ; of how crowded was the Castle :

" Everywhere here is crammed, I never saw so much room made before. The Gun room and the children's old play rooms are all converted into bedrooms." .

He writes of the reception of the bride at Queenborough on a fine day with a wind blowing freshly much to the discomfort of some of the German ladies-in-waiting ; of the railway journey where people assembled at all the stations to give the Princess

a welcome and of her arrival at Windsor where the whole town had turned out with enthusiasm: "The Germans will not be able to say that the bride has not been well received. I feel sure they could never get such a reception abroad."

He was particularly anxious that there should be no possibility of adverse German criticisms or any lack of hospitality or generosity and he says:

"... Very fortunate I was here; Ponsonby would otherwise have interfered most unpleasantly as regards presents for the Germans as well as for the trip abroad. . . ."

He writes also exact and solicitous details as to his wife's arrival for the service, at what hour she must start on the cold drive of 17 miles and at what point a royal carriage should meet her to bring her through the barriers in the streets to the church itself. We get a glimpse into the choir before the service started when the place was calm with only a murmur of hushed expectancy. There is colour enough even when the chapel is dim and empty. Though the carved choir stalls may be black with age the paneling above them is encrusted with enamelled coats of arms of former Knights of the Garter, and the banners of the living Knights hang above in a riot of heraldic emblazonment.

Elphinstone himself was at the chapel early and here, isolated for a moment from the toil of the day, the two had a few minutes together alone. Writing later he tells my mother:

"Bye the bye, the account in the *Daily Telegraph* begins with: 'A lady in white satin, ostrich plumes and diamonds opened the proceedings by chatting away familiarly with an elderly gentleman in court dress while they had the choir to themselves.' The first time you have figured thus in daily print."

It was an island of quiet peace in the over-busy time—a breathing-space before the ceremony ahead. Then Elphinstone slipped away back to his post at the Castle, as one by one the seats in the chapel filled with guests; ambassadors ablaze with gold embroidery and stars; ladies in evening dress with the court headgear of ostrich feathers and yards of floating tulle, wearing diamonds and historic jewels; the Maharajah Duleep Singh and his Maharanee in oriental splendour; bearers of names familiar in English history seated under their own banners and coats of arms as Knights of the Garter; Benjamin Disraeli, now the Earl of Beaconsfield, wearing the star and collar of the

order, seated in his own stall next to the Duke of Northumberland. The place gradually filled, and then the sharp challenge of silver trumpets announced the first of several processions and a fresh wave of uniforms surged into the choir. There came heralds in embroidered tabards, headed by the Master of the Ceremonies—that General Seymour whom we last saw struggling up an alpine glacier exhausted but undaunted. There came Gentlemen-at-Arms and Yeomen of the Guard in scarlet and gold. There came familiar faces, friends who had come as guests at Blackheath or greeted as hosts in London; Grand Dukes and Serene Highnesses and our own royal Princes and Princesses. Then came the bridegroom, wearing the green of the Rifle Brigade. On his right walked the Prince of Wales, and on his left the Duke of Edinburgh in naval uniform. There followed the German Ambassador, and then came the Bride with her orange blossom and soft web-like point d'Alençon, her eight attendant daughters of Dukes and Marquesses keeping guard over the many yards of her train. On her right was the Crown Prince in cuirassier uniform, on her left her father in red with a black sash embroidered in silver worn across his shoulder. They all made low obeisance to the small presiding figure overlooking the scene from the royal gallery, a figure who dominated everybody, dressed in black silk; for though black silk at times can be humble, it can also be the background against which diamonds look their most dazzling, and which sets off the blue of the Garter ribbon and shows in its most dramatic brilliancy the Koh-i-Noor; a figure small in stature but very great in dignity.

Then the Archbishop stepped forward and the service ran its course; the responses came clear on his side, low on hers, interspersing the quiet tones of the priest and the chanting of the men's and boys' voices. Finally after the blessing there burst forth the triumph of organ and choir in the glory of the "Hallelujah Chorus." There was a moment's pause and then came the distant boom of guns firing a salute in the Long Walk.

For Elphinstone it was a happy ending of many years of anxious planning.

When the function was over and the couple safely away on their honeymoon there came an anticlimax. The day was cold and a tired reaction was inevitable for those on whom had fallen the organising beforehand. In the afternoon Prince Frederick Charles, the bride's father, wished to look over Bagshot Park. Much against Elphinstone's wishes this had to be agreed to, and

he accompanied an obviously critical father-in-law over the unfinished house. The gardens and the situation were approved of, the trees were considered good but the Prince did not hesitate to speak his mind about the size and height of the rooms. It was a very cold drive home, and tempers were short and conversation inclined to be curt; but it was not Elphinstone only upon whom fell the brunt of the Red Prince's displeasure. Ending her long account of the day's doings Her Majesty writes in her journal :

"Dinner as yesterday in Dining room. . . . I gave Pce. Fredk. Charles' health and he mine. He was very cross. He had been to Bagshot and complained that there were not sufficient rooms!! I assured him I had just the same at Osborne!"

CHAPTER XXXIV : PRINCE ARTHUR'S WEDDING TOUR

PLANS for the Prince's honeymoon had been considered even before his engagement was announced. As early as May 6th, 1878, Her Majesty had written to Elphinstone :

" . . . As regards therefore the future the Queen is decidedly of opinion that they should *not travel* the first year abroad.

England will be *completely* new to the Princess and she should become acquainted with it—gradually and quietly. Claremont *even if it were* chosen for the honeymoon *might be thought too dull* and out of the way, though it is *very near* many other places and the country is charming and the house delightful; in that case one of the many pretty places near Sunninghill might be hired for a few months. . . ."

To one who had learnt as a child to appreciate the beauties of the Aegean and Mediterranean in spring-time the glories of suburban Surrey made no urgent appeal; by August 1878 the Prince had planned pretty clearly in his mind a tour of the Mediterranean which seemed an echo of the trip in the *Enchantress*. That happy afternoon spent among the old pink brick ruins of the theatre at Taormina and the strenuous days in the

Levant riding over rough country in quest of game or archaeology must have left a deep impression.

A fortnight after the Prince's wedding the Royal yacht *Osborne* sailed from Bordeaux. Except for Elphinstone they were a very young party on board. The bride was still in her 'teens and her two ladies, Mrs. Egerton and my mother, not much older. (Captain Egerton was now on the Prince's staff and when my father died became Comptroller in his place.) Prince Louis of Battenberg was with them as a lieutenant in the yacht. Only a few of my father's letters are bound in the royal volumes but from my mother's accounts to her people we get some informal sidelights on the trip.

The first stopping-place was Lisbon, where the King of Portugal came to call on the yacht in a barge of the time of Columbus, manned by eighty rowers, two at each oar, who were dressed in red with old-fashioned headdresses, a very lovely sight. From the yacht lying at anchor in the Tagus my mother wrote home :

" Travelling in this way moments for writing letters seem few and far between and since we arrived here I've not had a second to myself. All the evening people kept coming and while the swells go and talk to the Duke and Duchess we have to talk to the people in attendance and after two or three hours of small talk in French and English one gets tired. Yesterday we had a long day ; started from here at ten for Cintra. The King sent carriages—four mules to each carriage ; it was a long drive about 17 miles through ugly country only that there were such quantities of flowers all along the road, roses, heliotrope and geraniums climbing up all the houses ; such steep hills too which they never attempt to zig-zag but the road goes straight up and down. . . .

We were rather pressed for time as we were to dine with the King at 8 p.m. As it was we got back very late for the mules wouldn't go fast ; in the first carriage the postillion's mule came down twice and another one took to jibbing and another one went dead lame. I don't think the King need be proud of his animals. We got back to the yacht and scrambled into evening dress in ten minutes and then went off in the steam launch three miles down river, got into carriages and drove up the hill to the Palace just half an hour late ; however it was their fault as the King's Chamberlain was with us on the expedition to Cintra and ought to have known about times and how the mules went.



*For Sir Howard
from Louise Margaret
Arthur.*

The Duke and Duchess of Connaught



Group at Taormina

*Sir Howard and
Lady Elphinstone*

*The Duke and
Duchess of Connaught*

*Sir Alfred Egerton
Lady Egerton*

Dinner was rather fun. The King's brother took me in and chatted away tremendously; he is much more lively than the King who is very dull and stupid like a drowsy bumble bee. The Queen is very shy and quiet and dresses extraordinarily and wears her hair like a ruffled bird's nest. . . ."

The following day she writes :

"All the swells came to dinner. . . . This time Don Alphonso took me in, the ex-King, such a charming old fellow, full of hobbies; he talked of china, painting, singing, botany and all manner of things. Unfortunately he has married some opera singer whom nobody likes."

Her appreciation of Spanish railways is shown in a letter written from Gibraltar :

"The railway journey from Seville to Granada was most tedious and slow; if the Guard happens to meet a friend at the station they thought nothing of stopping and chatting a quarter of an hour beyond the time. The Duke was asked how long he wished to stop at the stations but they didn't seem to approve of 'as short a time as possible' and we didn't get to Granada till past 11. . . .

We had hoped to come down from Granada quicker as it was all down hill, but instead we seemed to go slower and really several dogs who chose to come and bark at the train followed for a long way. . . .

. . . Bye the bye if this letter is incoherent you mustn't mind as Howard and the Duke are dodging about the cabin arranging where everybody is to sit for dinner this evening. We are to be 22 and the Huguenot otherwise Colonel Lempriere¹ is to take me in. . . ."

Two days later she writes :

"Dinner was capital fun as having had the swells the evening before, the young ones came."

They went again to Taormina, a day of sunshine where Elphinstone had an opportunity for brush and paint, and the Captain of the yacht a chance for his pet hobby, that of taking photographic groups."

¹ Colonel Lempriere had stood to Milla's for his popular picture of the "Huguenot."

The Mediterranean was not much smoother than it had been on that previous tour in 1865. My mother writes after leaving Gibraltar :

“ . . . The sea was jumping about, all of us ill—Howard of course excepted, for the worse we all get the better he is. . . . The Duchess is very plucky and won't give in. . . . ”

The Aegean was kinder to them than had been the Mediterranean. They put in to harbours filled by brilliantly painted fishing smacks with orange sails ; small boys in rowing boats crowded round the yacht bargaining over fruit, wooden toys or small curios ; they landed one afternoon on the rocky coast of Samos where the sea

“ was the true Mediterranean blue, only so smooth that it looked more like oil than water. We landed in a pretty little bay and had at once a quantity of the natives around us. Howard and the Duchess set to work to sketch, the men were only too delighted to be picked out for a sitting and instead of clamouring for money evidently considered it an honour, grinned and laughed and were most agreeable. The fishing was done with a seine net, but the results were *very* small, out of four castings only three small fish and a stickle-back turning up. However they all enjoyed it immensely, it was great fun watching in the extraordinarily clear water the sailors swimming about with all their clothes on and the footmen trying to imitate them. All the gentlemen were got up in the most wonderful costumes and waded about in a delicious fashion, much to our envy.

The Prince was very energetic in the water, hauling the line ashore, and among the masses of wild flowers among the rocks a huge fire was lit ready to cook for tea the exasperatingly wary fish.”

Even here away from a village the country folk had crowded round ; in a town the royal progress was through an almost impenetrable crowd lined by police and soldiers. Sometimes a comic element would come on board the yacht in the form of elderly officials wearing amazing assortments of uniform and both the Duchess and Prince Louis had a happy knack for caricature. On other days history had had its turn and they spent afternoons exploring the site where Diana reigned at Ephesus or seeing the relics of Agamemnon as expounded by Dr. Schliemann.

Apart from an ivory Renaissance cabinet bought in Seville,

some fine Rhodian ware and a number of exquisitely shaped pots of the third and fourth centuries B.C., their hopes of purchasing good things were unrealised. Most of the bazaars were devoid of Eastern goods, "Manchester predominated throughout." Also a disadvantage was that the arrival of a yacht became the signal for prices to soar sky high, beyond the purse of a mere "in waiting." There was another drawback to shopping. At Rhodes we are told :

"Till yesterday we had been very fortunate and not needed Keating's Powder, but in the pottery shop Mrs. Egerton and I found it advisable to get up and sit on the window sills while the Duchess was choosing out pottery, as the floor and the walls were *very* lively ; we had to retire and have private chases when we got back."

It was not only the pottery shops that were lively. The Palace at Athens, a huge place with immense rooms still unfinished, was not only lively with mosquitoes but with other creatures as well. Burning incense and sprinkling Keating's had no effect. There were other troubles also in Greece. The future King Constantine was at this time aged only 10—and was a considerable pickle with little or no reverence for learned professors of archaeology. To watch this imp skylarking and yet to keep a face that seemed intelligent about matters B.C. needed self-control.

Every minute of their time at Athens was occupied between sightseeing among temples, attending mass at the Græek Cathedral, a full-dress dinner for 142 people, museums, the opera and finally a long expedition out to Tatoi where the Queen was staying in a small house. Lunch, picturesquely arranged in the garden under a guelder rose tree, was interrupted by a hailstorm, and as the large party fled as best they could with the wreckage of their meal to a corridor outside the very small dining-room, all trace of formalities vanished and the latter end of lunch was hilarious even if slightly wet. Later they wandered over the grounds and inspected the site of a future house, where the rooms might be large enough to prevent a repetition of the disaster.

There were compensations that counterbalanced these troubles at Athens. Their rooms in the Palace looked across to the Acropolis, standing dark against the fading daylight or shining golden in the dawn with the town, smaller then than now, huddled half in shadow at the foot of the steep cliff. More than once in these letters comes some such a phrase as "Howard had a few

minutes painting" or "The Sketchers sketched." The hot radiance of southern sunlight stirred in him that irresistible longing for paint and paper that the more neutral tones of England left dormant. On his rare periods of leave lasting more than a few days he nearly always put the Alps between himself and England, and here among these southern islands he was in congenial surroundings. There could be no possibility of him following the Crown Princess's ill-chosen advice; what hope for him was there of three weeks spent at one drawing?

Here at Athens he sometimes escaped from work even by daylight. But at night when the rest of the party had gone to bed, he went to the Acropolis in the moonlight. It was moments such as these, alone with pencil in one of the most beautiful spots on earth, with moonlight turning the marble to magic and his imagination given full play, that the artist must have been well compensated for any tiresome duties of the soldier and the courier.

CHAPTER XXXV : ARCHITECT, ARTIST AND SOLDIER

THE area known geologically as Bagshot sands is not good farming country; the soil is largely gravel. From a money-making point of view Dick Turpin probably chose a wise course when he decided to earn his living on the roads rather than in the fields of this part of Surrey. The old Windsor Forest stretched for many miles outside the present Windsor Park; in his time there were few houses and little interruption to the wilderness of fir, birch and heather. Indeed it can then have been little altered since the Romans made their road from Staines to Silchester, the line of which can still be traced on open moorland not yet built upon. But in the valleys where the streams have deposited some soil an attempt has been made to cultivate the land and a few farms and houses show history in their faded pink walls or white Georgian façades. An occasional old church tells where a village is not a mere modern upstart. On the outskirts of these villages "squatters" have from time to time nibbled into the forest, making a potato and a bean grow where

before was only gorse and bracken, and getting a poor living off the stony earth. The greater number of red-brick villas that now turn this country into suburbia must rank with the road-houses and gimcrack filling stations as a twentieth-century outcrop. Bagshot in the 1870's had hardly changed its character from that of posting station in the not-far-distant coaching times; there still were told stories of duels fought in the back yard of an inn and a blood-curdling tale of a haunted posting-house whose landlord murdered his own son in mistake for a rich traveller. One change however came to this district during the nineteenth century, and an early sign of it Elphinstone had noted on that cold drive from Windsor to Aldershot in 1860. Rhododendrons and azaleas, though foreigners, have nearly two hundred years' standing in England and seed themselves at Bagshot almost as weeds; so that if to-day all the red brick was swept away the place would remain one vast garden.

The year 1876 saw Elphinstone busy over plans for the rebuilding of Bagshot House. The park, one of those pockets of cultivation which lie along the upper waters of the Windle stream, is Crown land and had once been a royal hunting-lodge. In 1875 Her Majesty was making plans that Prince Arthur should live here whenever he might marry: ". . . Sir Howard has *not* answered about Bagshot as a residence," she writes. "She hopes he shares her views? She feels very anxious about it. . . . Only let it be begun in February or March. In the meantime Holyrood or any of the Queen's other residences would do for him." The House stood not far from the village and from old prints it looks a pleasant white Georgian mansion, neither small nor immense, and having quiet dignity. It was however considered impossible as a residence for the Prince, and after consultation with Government Departments it was decided to demolish it and rebuild some half-mile away on what is certainly a far better position. "There is little left of the old house," Elphinstone writes in August 1876. "Fortunately it was pulled down, for most of the timber is rotten." Reading here we find ourselves faced with that unsolved problem of the change of fashion in things artistic and architectural. How was it possible for an artist and connoisseur to be in any way responsible for the beturreted and garish building that took the place of that quiet Georgian house? Yet responsible to some extent Elphinstone certainly was.

The Queen was obviously no believer in Government control :

" . . . with respect to Bagshot the Queen would *warn* Sir Howard (she says this in *great confidence*) against Mr. Menzies, who made a *bad job* in some ways of Cumberland Lodge and of the Woods and Forests *in general*. They are slower and *pay* more for their workmen and are more disagreeable than any people in the world—besides Mr. Menzies is *no* architect. Let the money be given and the best and most reasonable person *be got to build it for WHAT is allowed*. . . ." Elphinstone answers assuring the Queen that the Woods and Forests are only being consulted over inevitable responsibility : " . . . He is quite aware of the long time taken by them and the enormous expense they incur in their buildings ; he is therefore trying very hard indeed to take the building entirely into his own hands and have it superintended by his own people whom he can thoroughly rely upon. . . ." The plan he adopted later when he was sole architect in building his own house, of placing the living rooms south and west and the offices north and east, was carried out here at the Park. He told Her Majesty of trees that had to be cut and she answered from Glassalt Shiel, Loch Muich :

" The Queen thanks Sir Howard Elphinstone for his letter received here (where we have very muggy and very wet weather). The Queen is distressed about the Trees. Pray pause before you cut many down. It would be a great loss and a great pity. What and where are they ? Mr. Menzies is far too fond of cutting down trees."

So the modern building took shape among fine old timber and one of the earliest gardens in England to be planted with azaleas, with ancient gnarled bushes of amber, apricot and dusty gold. We hear little more about it till two years later when the Queen's curiosity to see the place where her son would soon come and live took active form.

WINDSOR CASTLE. *December 1st, 1878.*

" The Queen thinks of driving over some morning early with Beatrice to get a *glimpse* of Bagshot.

As she may only be able to decide the same morning on account of the weather she would not ask Sir Howard to go personally to meet her, as it must be uncertain, but she would wish the Clerk of the Works to be aware that she may be coming over so as to let her in. Some day before we leave this the Queen must ask to see Sir Howard here.

She trusts Lady Elphinstone is keeping well ? "



H.M. Queen Victoria



Bagshot Park



Pinewood

From a sketch by Colonel Hart Davis

There was a reason imminent why Her Majesty should ask especially after Lady Elphinstone's health.

A week after this we get her impression of the new house and realise how no detail escaped her eye.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *December 8th, 1878.*

"The Queen is anxious to tell Sir Howard Elphinstone that we went yesterday morning to Bagshot and went all over the house which we were very much pleased with and think will do extremely well. The rooms seem most comfortable and everything well arranged and the offices very good and close together. But there is one mistake which ought at once to be rectified and that is the *arms* on the outside. They have put the Prince Consort's instead of one of our Children's arms, viz: they are the British and Saxon arms *quartered*—whereas they ought to be these with the Saxon arms as an escutcheon of pretence, thus:—(sketch). But they have put it so:—(sketch) which only the *husband* of the Sovereign or the Heiress apparent can do. How could this have happened as all Arthur's seals etc. are alright?

Could Sir Howard Elphinstone come here to dine and sleep on *Wednesday* or would he rather come in the afternoon and go back again on account of Lady Elphinstone?"

Wednesday turned out to be an awkward day for Sir Howard to go, as he did, to Windsor; for late on the Tuesday evening the Queen's godchild was taken ill. He and my mother spent the early part of the night nursing her, and their second daughter was born on Wednesday morning at 10 a.m.

One final criticism comes a year after Prince Arthur's marriage:

"... The Queen thought Bagshot very comfortable but excepting the dining room and drawing room she thinks *all* too *dark*; the windows too small and the furniture too dark. It is the fashion the Queen hears. The Queen thinks the Duchess very amiable."

Lying about a mile from Bagshot Park where some of the springs that feed the Windle rise at the foot of rolling heather land was Mere's farm with three or four poor fields of grazing. It was here that Elphinstone and his wife decided shortly after they married to build a house sufficiently close to the Park so that when he retired from the army he could easily manage

Prince Arthur's affairs. Above the fields were some old squatters' holdings and a stretch of fir, larch and chestnut of considerable age, and it was among these old trees that they placed the house, altering the name to Pinewood in recollection of Lord Knutsford's house where they had spent many happy visits.

Often during the ten years they were at Aldershot they rode over the open heather, except for the village of Frimley, passing hardly a house till they came to the "Jolly Farmer" on the hill above Bagshot. They watched the trees being felled to make way for the foundations of their home; they spent enthralling hours "budding" rose bushes and planting shrubs. Sometimes they would drive on to the Park and stay for a night or two while Elphinstone got through a quantity of estate work and we get an early mention of tennis on one such visit. There were local functions and charities in which the royal couple played their parts and we find that the character of Bagshot was changing. From having been the home of a highwayman it was to become that of a prince, who for the next sixty years as "the Duke" was the much-loved central figure of the place.

In my mother's diary there comes one illuminating sentence which gives a clue to much of their life at Aldershot:—"In constant state of telegrams." Elphinstone's double career involved not only an astonishing amount of travelling but great uncertainty of movements. His work as a soldier was far from stationary; added to this at any moment he might have to represent the Prince at some function or unexpected funeral in England or abroad. A typical letter comes from Windsor, the date being merely given as Monday, '83, 5 p.m.

"Just arrived and the Duke tells me that the funeral is on Wednesday morning, so that I should have to start tonight, but I cannot do that as my things are at Aldershot, and there is no chance of getting them up in time for this evening's train. The question however remains undecided until Prince Christian arrives at 6.30 p.m. and he may be able to say when the funeral is so that I might have to start by tomorrow morning's train, reach Aldershot by handsome this evening and thence start on by night train to town. The Duke does not know to whom he is otherwise to give the charge of representing him."

There were also during these years many visits to Osborne, where he sometimes would go expecting to stay for a night only to find he was needed for a week, when he would write home

urgently for more clothes, his medals and stars, etc. In January 1878 he writes his wife descriptions of a bitterly cold visit to Portsmouth where the new turret ships, *Thunderer* and *Inflexible*, were inspected : " They are magnificent specimens of machinery ; everything most perfect but I doubt their answering as they appear too complicated for fighting work." Writing of the garden he says, " I wish you could see the *Pinus Insignis*, they are quite magnificent trees now. They were planted in 1850 and a greater ornament in shape and colour than anything else I know. Pinewood ought to have some." The next day he wrote her a description of the Sunday service at Osborne

" held in the Council Room here. It is a large room with windows at a, a, highly decorated ceiling, doors etc. but the colour to my mind is too much after Dresden china (that peculiar pale tint). Canon Duckworth officiated. The usual thing is to place a table on some steps near the window for the clergyman ; the Queen and Royal Family take their seats on the right and the household on chairs just behind, the upper servants at opposite end of room, while the other servants remain in the passage, the large folding doors of the room being left open. The service consisted of the Litany, then the Communion Service and then the Sermon, (no singing) the whole lasting $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour."

The following day Her Majesty wished an experiment to be tried with that new invention, the telephone.

" There was a grand séance last night with the telephone, Professor Bell being the chief actor. Wires were connected with Cowes, and adjoining House where Sir Thomas Biddulph lives. But somehow the first wire failed and consequently the Queen did not hear the quartet singing which had been purposely got up for her at Cowes. But at midnight the fault in the wire was found out and the connection completed. The singing sounded charming, and we likewise heard a bugle played at Southampton and an organ in London, but the latter was very weak."

In the year 1881 Elphinstone's military career nearly came to an end. He was ordered to go as Commanding Royal Engineer to Mauritius. To manage Prince Arthur's affairs from there would have been out of the question and for a time there seemed to Elphinstone's mind no alternative to retirement from the army.

Eventually he and Charles Gordon arranged an exchange enabling Elphinstone to remain on at Aldershot. A month or two later he received a letter from Gordon; ten closely written sheets giving the latter's opinion on many subjects—the poor organisation that administered to the security of Aden; the obsolete methods of the retirement of more than obsolete Generals; the quite inadequate system of the defence of the Island, etc.; a letter taken up at intervals and not finished for several weeks, too long and technical to quote in full.

MAURITIUS, 24.6.81.

“MY DEAR ELPHIN (*sic*),

It is only fair to let you know what you escaped. . . . Oh!!! This place is the end of the world. They say that H.R.H.¹ in one of his furies with someone said to the Adjutant-General ‘send him to H——.’ That the Adjutant-General said, ‘We have no station there, your Royal Highness,’ on which His Royal Highness said: ‘Send him to the Mauritius.’ There is an old Major-General here, 70 in October. . . . Wood the Procureur-General died the other day of abscess in liver. White the paymaster died yesterday, both were taken ill just when I came here . . . at the funeral of Captain White, no arrangement, all higgledy-piggledy. General with Cocked Hat on backwards, etc. etc. (I thought the R.E. were the only people who did these things). . . . A Colonel R.E. here is a farce, there is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a Battery, 3 companies of the 58th Regt. and 5 sappers! There is a Colonel R.A. also! . . . My arrival was a sort of thunderbolt among them, and still more as I persisted in going to an Hotel. The General's wife is a Dragon, and I fear that class so I have put on the recluse air and mean to strike against being usurped. Had Lady E. come out what would she not have suffered.”

Returning to some criticisms written a few days earlier he says: “I may have been unjust to (that poor whale) H.R.H. attacked by the sword fish Wolseley.”

Of the totally inadequate defences on the Island he says:

“A Russian cruiser came from China the other day and looked in here, you know that last year they went to every place we had in the East and yet this place, like Galle, Colombo, Penang, Singapore, Hongkong, is utterly without defence. The sole

¹ The Duke of Cambridge, Commander-in-Chief.

defence here are two 6½ ton guns. We are exactly in the same state of idiocy as the French were in 1870, utterly unprepared everywhere . . . and yet Childers¹ and all those Ministers are perfectly content and wrapped up in their ignorance as happy as larks, with their flippant answers in the House of Commons. . . . I have gone into the whole question of the Mauritius, its defence, etc., and given it in a report to the General. I have clambered up the hills to see the defensive positions and have come to this conclusion; that for Imperial purposes the isle is valuable only for its Port Louis. . . . In my opinion the defence of these places ought to be Naval. . . . I suppose however that my report will be considered factious, and so things will go on. . . . I will not go into details but conclude my dear Elphinstone in saying that if you wanted to find a place where things have been let go to sleep, I recommend you to try the Mauritius."

So thanks to Charles Gordon on December 31st, 1881, Elphinstone was appointed to command the Royal Engineers at Aldershot, which appointment he held for five years. The official house for the C.R.E. and later for the Chief Engineer, has always been Vine Cottage, screened from the dusty main road by lilac trees and having a lovely garden behind. My father's predecessor seemed unwilling to turn out; time went by and he made no move to go though the house was not technically his any longer. My mother was expecting a baby and anxious to get settled so broad hints and polite requests having been of no avail, the couple with considerable private chuckling, set out in detail to the very last halfpenny exactly what it was costing them to be without their official residence—and sent in the bill. The effect was instantaneous and they moved into their new house within a few days, long before the lilacs came into bloom, and their third daughter was born on May 1st, 1882.

There were many visits to Windsor during these years. The seventeen miles had either to be driven or travelled by cross-country rail involving several changes. We hear of one occasion when the drive was made on a cold day of March in pouring rain, starting early and stopping at Bagshot to give the horses a rest. They dined each night with the Queen; at luncheon they met Mr. Gladstone. It could hardly be expected that a keen soldier—who had studied continental ideas and opinions,

¹ Childers was War Secretary in Mr. Gladstone's second Ministry.

who was not ignorant of imperial questions and who also claimed Charles Gordon as one of his greatest friends—could have much sympathy with Mr. Gladstone. The rest of the wet day however was spent in the library, a soothing antidote. To my father “2d coloured” was always of infinitely more value than “1d plain”; he was turning his edition of Nash’s *Ancient Mansions of England* from black and white into copies of the coloured series at Windsor.

During these years with my mother’s help Elphinstone designed and carried out panelling and doors for the library in his own house. These were painted in flowing renaissance arabesques taken largely from designs by Raphael at Venice and in the Vatican, and this work was finished only a year before his death. Another outlet for his painting energies while he was at Aldershot that involved much time and labour was the decorating of the Royal Engineer’s theatre. He was one of its original promoters and guests at No. 2 Hut and at Vine Cottage were liable to find themselves with a large pot of paint in one hand, an enormous brush in the other and orders to get on with the work of creating a Venetian palace or a rocky gorge. He was an inspiring master under whom to serve apprenticeship for he so enjoyed the work himself. This was done in no slapdash amateur fashion; page after page of sketch book was covered with delicate pencil drawings of the intricate folds of velvet curtains looped with cords whose ends are finished by heavy tassels. On some of these sketches is written “Vaudeville 1880” or “Opera Berlin,” others are careful studies in coloured chalk on tinted paper. A whole portfolio still remains filled with rough drawings for drop scenes and carefully squared finished designs in which the reflections of San Giorgio are seen between the dark silhouettes of gondolas, or the Rock of Gibraltar catches the setting sun while peasants load a fishing smack drawn up on the Spanish coast. In May 1884 the Gibraltar drop scene was used for the first time at the R.E. theatrical society’s performance, when they proudly had also the new addition of electric lighting.

Sometimes when my mother was away we get from his letters an idea of the everyday life at Aldershot: “We had a tremendously long day,” he writes in August 1885, “and I have only just returned here 5.30. Last night I dined with the Rifle Brigade, the Duke being there, and this morning I met him at 9 on Rushmore Common to inspect the Battalion; the Grand Duke of Hesse looking on. Then we went to inspect the 5th

Battalion Rifle Brigade (Tower Hamlets) and after that the 10th Hussars. Then the inauguration of the statue of the Great Duke¹ with a salute of 21 guns. Then home to change into patrol jacket and lunch with the 10th Hussars. Subsequently inspecting the stables of the 7th Hussars, and then on here to show the Grand Duke our house, and then to the station to catch the 4.48 train. The Duke (of Connaught) asked me whether I could come away for ten days or so. He and the Duchess are going to Germany, in *Victoria and Albert*, via Hamburg. No doubt had you been here you would have come also, but now she thinks she might do without a lady. . . . On Friday I go to Osborne to see the Queen, returning here on Saturday." My mother more than once took the children to France in the summer and Elphinstone thought nothing of going to Deauville for a Saturday to Monday. The day before leaving on one of these week-end trips he wrote: "I shall be awfully busy tomorrow as I am umpire in chief and no doubt will have to write a report of the field day on the Foxhills. At 3.30 I have a meeting with my lawyer . . . and at 4.30 to look at some cooks for India (for the Duke). It will be a regular scramble to get away." Horses played an important part in Aldershot life, and the soldier required qualities in his not needed by the civilian. A few days after the last letter Elphinstone wrote: "Another early Field day this morning in the long valley. Fight commenced at 6.30. I rode Hamilton's grey—perfectly quiet and steady under fire, rough at a trot, smooth at a canter and wonderfully safe across rough ground; but he is no beauty and I can hardly ride him at a swell parade, so I won't buy. . . . Such a pile of papers on my table and tomorrow the pontooning at Egham will not diminish my work but Friday I hope to get through some of it." Elphinstone often acted as umpire during mock battles, or else commanded mixed or skeleton forces in field days where his dispositions were noted for an entire absence of fuss. One who served under him for many years said: "I don't think I ever saw him angry," and another comment from a junior officer was upon his powers of holding his own views "when he had made sure of his own ground and brushed away fictitious surroundings." Even in those days there was no lack of work. Pontoon bridging was only one of the many occupations of a sapper. The Royal Engineers have

¹ This statue of the Duke of Wellington originally stood at Hyde Park Corner.

always prided themselves on being the pioneers of the army and most new inventions and ideas such as balloons and telegraph were worked out and developed by them until the new units were able to stand on their own feet as the Royal Air Force and Royal Corps of Signals. The ordnance maps of Britain, so well known to the motorist, were the product of the Ordnance Survey, another branch of the R.E. and some of them were early work done by Elphinstone himself before he went to Windsor. Training, discipline, administration, fortification, maintenance and expansion of the camp were some of the matters dealt with by the C.R.E., a wide range of subjects. The charge of all buildings, roads and lands in the area meant considerable work. At this period, 30 years or so after the erection of the original wooden huts of Crimean times, the last subject was not a small one for Aldershot was changing from a small encampment in a large waste area into a town of brick-built barracks, with hospitals, churches, etc. As a senior officer on the staff of the General Officer Commanding at Aldershot Elphinstone would have a share also in all major military developments. No wonder his table was littered with papers.

CHAPTER XXXVI: THE DUKE'S MILITARY CAREER

THERE comes a gap of nearly two years in Her Majesty's letters to Elphinstone, between September 1880 and July 1882, a gap probably due to loss; we pick up the broken thread again with a telegram sent from Osborne to Aldershot on July 31, 1882:

"Many thanks for kind telegram. The parting yesterday was dreadful. I feel this beloved child's going terribly and the uncertainty of everything is so very trying. Hope to see you before long here. Duchess and baby arrived safely, former very sad. It is a great trial."

The cause of this parting was the departure of British troops for the Egyptian campaign. Elphinstone had the previous day been to say good-bye to the Duke of Connaught sailing for Africa in

command of the Guards Brigade and leaving the Duchess in England expecting another baby. Elphinstone wrote to Her Majesty :

July 29.

" . . . Seeing Prince Arthur thus leave England Sir Howard could not but feel deep regret at his not accompanying him also. It is the first time this has happened. Yet he understands the necessity of his remaining instead at home to look after the Duchess. . . . He need hardly say how thoroughly he can enter into Your Majesty's feelings on the subject and how deeply he sympathises with you, for even he himself found it a severe struggle to bid goodbye unmoved. What must Your Majesty's feelings be. At the same time the Prince is in good hands. . . . Throughout the army his departure for Egypt has been most enthusiastically received and praised. It will produce the best results to his future career."

Ten days later came Her Majesty's reply from Osborne :

"The Queen has been so engrossed and so occupied with political and military events, the embarkation of her brave troops and letters and telegrams that she could not write, but her thoughts have been often with Sir Howard Elphinstone knowing what he must feel and have felt at seeing his beloved Prince go out on active service exposed to peril, without him, who had so carefully watched over and guarded him and kept *all* dangers (as much as he could) from him.

Oh ! if Sir Howard only *knew* what that separation cost her ! It seemed as though her heart were torn in two—for no child (excepting her beloved Beatrice) was ever so loved by her as that precious Darling son is, her darling from his birth ! And what she suffers now ! By day and whenever she wakes at night ! It is the *one* thing she thinks of ! He bears heat well and he has 3 very good people with him ; Sir J. McNiell, and Major Lane and Dr. Scott, the two former of whom would sacrifice their lives for him, and the *rest* we must leave in the hands of an all-merciful God—who has ever watched over him in danger !

So far the voyage has been excellent. The poor Duchess is very brave and calm, but her sleep is not very good—and *one only thought* of course, never leaves her.

The dear baby is our great delight, and is a darling baby, so like her dear father.¹

¹ Princess Margaret, later Crown Princess of Sweden.

Arthur arrived safely at Alexandria this morning and waits for orders.

Could Sir Howard come here on Monday 15th early in the afternoon and stay till the next morning.

She thanks Sir Howard for his 2 letters."

During her husband's absence the Duchess wrote almost daily to Elphinstone, consulting him on all kinds of estate matters. After receiving the news of the battle of Tel-el-Kebir she wrote from Balmoral of her thankfulness at hearing of the Duke's safety, adding :

" Sir Garnet said in his telegram to the Queen that the Guards had charged most gallantly and the Duke's behaviour and the way in which he led them most admirable. I must but feel very proud and delighted that he should have been so much praised and am sure that you also are extremely pleased and gratified at it. . . ."

Her Majesty also wrote at this time and a few weeks later she sent him further news from Egypt, enclosing him a letter from the Duke.

BALMORAL, Oct. 1, 1882.

"The Queen has no time to write upon other matters to-day but must send Sir Howard Elphinstone the 2 letters which he may *keep* which will give *him*, darling Arthur's devoted friend and former Governor, as much pleasure as it has done her. God bless our darling Child, God spare him ! Sir J. McNiell says it was the *hottest fire* HE *ever* was in and that Arthur behaved 'like a veteran.'

Sir Howard said to the Queen, 'He will do it splendidly,' and he has !

It is a reward for the terrible anxiety the Queen suffered for the last 3 weeks from the landing to the 13th ! And then the dear Dean's loss.¹ It is *irreparable*. Many thanks for his kind sympathy."

It is perhaps inevitable that during the 1880's not only are there fewer letters than earlier in this correspondence but that such as there are are of less interest. For twenty years the boy Prince and then the young man had been the pivot of Elphinstone's activities and affections ; by 1879 things had altered ; Elphinstone was married with at long last a home and growing family of his own.

¹ The Dean of Windsor.

Prince Arthur had chosen his bride and his house was built and arranged. For the most part Elphinstone's advice was needed for the not very thrilling questions of stables, drains or nurseries. He had often to manage Bagshot Park when the Prince was serving his country abroad; the work involved was not small and we know from account books it sometimes took him to London as often as eight or ten times a month. There were also rides and drives to Bagshot from Aldershot and in the days before motors 8 miles each way involved half a day's expedition. He continued to go to Her Majesty at Osborne or Windsor at frequent intervals. We see her at work with him from one of her letters: ". . . When the Queen *wasn't* looking for the paper that she couldn't find, she found it, *safe* in her drawer. . . ." Perhaps he advised her over the choosing of carpets. Possibly it was merely routine details for Bagshot. Occasionally however the Prince's military career was in question, and then letters are frequent. When in 1883 the latter took up an appointment in India a number of questions had to be settled, among others one that faces so many English soldiers and their wives—the problem of the children.

The young Connaughts were not the only grandchildren with sole right to be housed by a devoted grandmother—the solution for lucky families. Her Majesty writes:

"She hopes all is definitely settled that the children don't go out with their parents. She is so sorry she could not receive them here now but the house is too full and Leopold's little girl is staying here during their absence. With such a number of grandchildren it is difficult to prevent little jealousies.

The Queen cannot give a good account of herself, tho' the leg is progressing, but the hot weather is trying and her depression of spirits painfully great.

The Queen hears how lovely Sir Howard's sweet little girls¹ looked at Bagshot the other day."

The only letter in which the Queen ever says that she "must differ with Sir Howard" is written on the question whether a wife's duty is to be with her husband or her children in cases of separation.

BALMORAL CASTLE, Nov. 7, 1883.

". . . The Queen must differ with Sir Howard about the Duchess's return, much as she is against the *children* going out, equally is she against *her leaving* Arthur, unless her health requires

¹ The writer regrets she was not one of these little girls.

it, or she comes back for only two or three months. A wife's place is with her Husband except in war—and the Queen thinks Louischen *ought* to remain with him as their stay D.V. is not to be a prolonged one. But of course it must depend upon her health. . . .”

Elphinstone was to return to this question later when he saw in India the tragedy of mothers parted from their children. After a two-day visit to Windsor in '84 my mother wrote a long account to the Duchess of the nursery there, and the reply came from Roorkie :

“ . . . You have told me more about our little ones than I have heard since I left them. It was a real pleasure to hear of all their little ways. As a rule I am told nothing except that they are very well and flourishing and which of course is the chief and most important thing, but one longs to know of all they do and say and thousands of little things. . . . I do miss them quite terribly. . . .”

From the beginning no plans for Prince Arthur's military life had been made without Elphinstone being consulted. The same rule seems to have held good even as late as 1885, for there are a number of letters written that autumn about the Duke's appointment to the Bombay Command. Reading them, we are brought face to face with the Elphinstone who was so quiet behind the scene, but who could handle a harassed Queen with calming efficiency and yet keep the Prince's interests as the first objective.

At the Queen's wish the Duke had returned from India on leave in June 1885 and his future was uncertain. General Roberts, the Viceroy and General Hardinge were all three anxious that he should succeed the last-named in the Bombay Command. Political reasons alone were against his appointment.

The name of Rawal Pindi suddenly supplanted that of Bombay and the change was not for the better. October found Elphinstone at Balmoral where the Queen, faced with a long separation from her son, was not taking the matter lightly. Her notes to Elphinstone have a peremptory tone unlike those she usually sent him.

“ Has no answer come ? Why ? ”

is the start of one of them. After he left Scotland, believing the whole matter settled, he received several letters from the Duke and also from Sir Henry Ponsonby showing that the problem had been



Balmoral, 1886

<i>Princess Beatrice</i>	<i>Prince Henry of Battenberg</i>
<i>The Duchess of Connaught</i>	<i>Queen Victoria</i>
<i>with Princess Patricia</i>	<i>with Princess Margaret</i>
<i>Prince Arthur</i>	<i>The Duke of Connaught</i>



The Elphinstone Family at Vine Cottage, 1886

reopened and that neither of them was finding the Queen in an easy mood. Sir Henry wrote :

“MY DEAR ELPHINSTONE,

After you had left I discovered that the Duke of Connaught was not at all keen on Rawal Pindi, tho' accepted it as an only chance. Later I discovered Her Majesty was dead against it. I reminded her of what she had said to me (and I think to you) in favour of it the evening before and she said : ' True—but had slept over it and could not bear the idea of his going away for so long. To Bombay, she could not object, tho' it would be painful, but she would not consent to the inferior place of Rawal Pindi.' This was rather a startler. . . .”

On October 23rd Prince Arthur wrote :

“ . . . The Queen is in a great way about Rawal Pindi and *positively* REFUSES to hear of our going out next month if it can *possibly* be arranged otherwise. Ponsonby has come to me twice to urge me not to go out so soon as the Queen cannot bear the idea of my not being in the house when the elections and possible change of Government take place. She also now most strongly objects to the Duchess going out to India so late as the beginning of December, which she says is running a great risk. I can't conceive what has made the Queen change her mind but she has been worrying herself terribly about the whole matter. . . .

Ever since you left we have had a very unpleasant time of it. I have done everything I know to try and make matters suit. . . .”

Two days later he wrote :

“ . . . From the moment you left the Queen suddenly changed round and has made every kind of difficulty about Rawal Pindi. . . .”

Eventually the Bombay Command was held by the Duke for four years, to the great satisfaction of the army, from the Generals commanding in India to the regimental officers and men.

CHAPTER XXXVII : GERMAN FRIENDS AND
ACQUAINTANCES

IN the autumn of 1880 and again in 1883 the Elphinstones went in waiting on the Duke and Duchess of Connaught for some visits in Germany, and also to attend manœuvres. It was strenuous ; they spent many hours in the saddle, starting early in the morning to watch the troops march past the Emperor and then riding across country in the hot September dust and glare. Court functions followed these tiring mornings ; dinners with the Emperor at the unpleasant hour of 3.15 followed by musical evenings ; perhaps after watching a field day, they would lunch with the Prince of Wales, who was also a visitor, dine with the Emperor and finish at the opera. Sometimes the day's programme was varied by races ; sometimes on a Sunday there was a chance of a quiet morning in the Crown Princess's studio, where the Princess tried in vain, as did every other artist to whom she ever sat, to catch a likeness of my mother's vivacious face.

The manœuvres were not over in a mere few days ; the German army was even then a serious affair, and these exercises lasted for more than three weeks. One day after a morning following the troops, my mother found herself seated at dinner next to Field-Marshal von Moltke. Light conversation was admittedly not in his line, yet during that meal the talk between the two never flagged ; when dinner was finished the Crown Princess came up to my mother laughing, inquisitive as to the language and subject of the discussion, adding : " Do you not know that your neighbour has the reputation of being silent in fourteen languages ? " My mother replied that they had spoken in French, and the subject that had kept them absorbed during the meal was music.

Another day after one of these Imperial dinners, the Elphinstones were standing among a crowd of officers and officials at the top of a flight of steps leading down to the drive of the Schloss watching the departure of various royal guests. Their own Prince and Princess had left and they were anxiously wondering how long it would be before they themselves could follow to get dressed for the next function and be again ready in waiting, when the eye of the old Emperor fell upon them in the crowd. He was himself just about to leave, but he grasped in a moment their predicament, and sending away his own carriage that was just arriving, he

ordered theirs to come in its place. It was an act of thoughtful courtesy never forgotten.

In my mother's rare moods of reminiscence she also told of the first time that they went "in waiting" together to Darmstadt after their marriage. They arrived in the afternoon. The Schloss was packed with people, a large house party of young folk. The Grand Duchess, Princess Alice of England, had died a few years previously, but her eldest daughter Victoria, who soon afterwards married Prince Louis of Battenberg, was a perfect hostess and did the honours of the house with gaiety. Sir Howard was an old friend—it was twenty years or more since he had first stayed at Darmstadt—but his wife was quite unknown to most of the Household. After tea a move was made, the Duke and Duchess were taken upstairs and a stout and elderly lady-in-waiting took charge of my mother to show her her room. As they entered they found her maid busy unpacking dresses at one end of the room, and Sir Howard's valet producing brushes and shaving things from a trunk at the other side. The lady-in-waiting stopped with a look of horror.

"But what has happened?" she gasped. "The Schloss is indeed very full, but this is impossible, there has been some dreadful mistake."

"It is quite all right, Baroness," was the answer; "please don't worry. Princess Victoria told me that as it was such a large party we could not be luxurious. I can assure you Sir Howard and I often double up without a second room, when we are in waiting."

The Baroness turned pale with horror. "*Mein Gott!* These English!! What customs!!!" she murmured and hurried from the room.

To the good lady "Sir Howard" was in attendance on the Duke of Connaught, and "Lady Elphinstone" was the Duchess's lady. She knew of no further connection.

In the autumn of 1884, while the Crown Prince and Princess were visiting England, they lunched at Vine Cottage accompanied by their three youngest daughters and Count Seckendorff. They went later in the month to Osborne, and while there they heard of the death of Lord Ampthill. Elphinstone also at Osborne wrote home on August 30th:

"I dined last night with the Queen and saw the Princess Royal who made all kinds of enquiries after you. She said she had so much enjoyed our lunch, as she had always longed to see our little

abode. She leaves this morning for Cowes and Claremont. They appear to have thoroughly enjoyed their stay here, but she cannot speak in strong enough terms of grief about Lord Ampthill's death. She says he was of immense use even personally to her in smoothing difficulties of family matters. I must say I am grieved at this sudden death. In a political sense it is an immense calamity. . . ."

It was not easy to find anyone who could replace Lord Ampthill either as diplomat or as one who could be of help to the Crown Princess. The appointment of Military Attaché to the Embassy became temporarily vacant at this moment, and at her wish this appointment was offered to Elphinstone. He wrote to the Queen on September 1, 1884 :

WEST WOODHAY HOUSE,
NEWBURY, BERKS.

"Sir Howard Elphinstone presents his most humble duty to Your Majesty and begs to state that he was telegraphed for yesterday by the Duke of Cambridge who wishes him to proceed to Berlin as a temporary measure to replace Colonel Swaine who has joined Lord Wolseley's staff in Egypt. As the Duke said it was very important they should have now at Berlin someone who was very well acquainted with Germany, Sir Howard could offer no objection provided it was only of a temporary measure, as otherwise he would be unable to look after Prince Arthur's interests.

Sir Howard is staying here now for a few days until he hears definitely when he is to start, as he is to be present at the manœuvres near Düsseldorf on the 13th September.

He trusts Your Majesty will have fine weather for Your journey to Scotland."

A week later he wrote again, giving the Queen details of Lord Ampthill's funeral, at which he had represented the Duke of Connaught, telling her also that the length of his stay in Berlin depended on Lord Wolseley's Egyptian Campaign. Before he left England, he received from Her Majesty two letters giving him details of the love affairs of two of her grandchildren. Princess Elizabeth, or "Ella" as she is called by the Queen, was the second daughter of Princess Alice and the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt, and married the Grand Duke Serge. Like her youngest sister, who became the wife of the Emperor Nicholas II

of Russia, she spent her youth in Darmstadt and her married life in Russia, and the fate of both sisters was tragic. The Grand Duke Serge was murdered in 1905 and she herself was assassinated in September 1918. Her body was reverently taken to Jerusalem, carried by night and hidden during the day, and she lies buried in the Russian Church of Gethsemane prayed over by the poverty-stricken nuns of the Orthodox Church.

Confidential.

BALMORAL CASTLE, *Sept. 9 1884.*

"The Queen writes to Sir Howard to *warn him not* to enter with the Empress (Augusta) *on the subject* of the *Grand Duke* of Hesse and his daughter, against whom she is filled with spite and unchristian feelings. Please cut it short ; say *you* know nothing (which is true as the Queen has never spoken on the subject).

She *can't* forgive poor Princess Ella for refusing the Hereditary Grand Duke of Baden which was surely better than marrying a man she did *not* like. The Empress is also very unkind towards the Crown Princess and *never* mentions her name to the Queen or answers her when she speaks of her own Child !

Pray write to the Queen fully about the manœuvres etc. etc. She fears the Emperor is rather failing, and this too much for his age of 87½ !!"

Princess Victoria to whom Her Majesty's second letter refers, was the second daughter of the Crown Princess, whom Prince Alexander of Battenberg wished to marry. Prince Alexander had been made ruler of the newly created state of Bulgaria by the treaty of Berlin in 1878. But Bismarck considered that a marriage between these two would interfere with his plans for Balkan politics, and he ruthlessly put a stop to this love match. Elphinstone was later to become involved in this affair.

BALMORAL CASTLE, *Sept. 10, 1884.*

"As Sir Howard has not yet left, the Queen adds a few lines, on a subject which she omitted yesterday.

It is that *he* should *know* that Princess Victoria of Prussia is very much attached to the Prince of Bulgaria and vice versa ; the Crown Princess favours the project and the Crown Prince is now not disinclined to it, but the Emperor and Empress are violently against it, and they are very unkind, and the Empress especially won't look at or speak to the poor girl, and her brothers and sisters

are also most unkind. Sir Howard should therefore take care *not* to join in the Empress's view, but rather put in a friendly word as he can say he knows the Queen is strongly in favour of it, having a high opinion of the Prince of Bulgaria and of his elder brother Prince Louis of Battenberg who is universally liked in England."

A fortnight later Elphinstone answered :

HOTEL DU NORD, COLOGNE,

23 Sept. '84.

"Sir Howard Elphinstone presents his most humble duty to your Majesty and begs to state that the manœuvres terminated this afternoon after 10 days most lovely weather. Altho' occasionally warm there was always a breeze and the frequent rain at night to a great extent laid the dust.

The total force assembled was not so large as was expected and did not exceed altogether 34,000 men of all arms, but the parade and march past performed with that extraordinary precision for which the Prussian troops are famous. In this respect there is no falling off of any kind, and the two army corps just reviewed are almost as smart and exact as the Guards at Berlin. Sir Howard has no hesitation however in saying that in manœuvring in the field, our troops, after a good year's training at Aldershot, are superior.

The subordinate officers from the Majors downwards are as a rule disciplined into such complete machines that individual judgment is not called into play and the men are consequently not led to the best advantage and the ground not always occupied as it ought to be.

The manœuvres were altogether very interesting and the Emperor seemed perfectly satisfied. The slight fainting fit which he had on Saturday morning has since forced him to drive in a carriage instead of on horseback, and altho' he has recovered his healthy looks, most people look upon the accident with alarm.

His reception everywhere has been most enthusiastic, but the people express their fears openly that it is probably the last time he will come here to review the troops. He received Sir Howard most graciously and repeatedly stated how pleased he was at his coming to Berlin.

Undoubtedly the Emperor looks much older than he did last year and his memory is by no means so exact as it was.

In the bustle of manœuvres Sir Howard had only a very short interview with the Empress, during which general topics only were touched and all dangerous ground avoided.

As the Empress goes now to Coblenz, he will not see her again until November.

Prince Frederick Charles was particularly civil and said that he had received excellent accounts from India,¹ which interested him very much.

Sir Howard took care to introduce Sir Frederick (Kaynes ?), who attended the manœuvres, to *everybody*, and his tall fine manly appearance created a very good impression, which was important, as there was a decided tendency among the Court officials to give a preference to other nations, especially to representatives of France and Russia.

Sir Howard trusts Your Majesty is enjoying fine weather at Balmoral.

He himself leaves to-morrow for Berlin."

There is a surprising lapse of time before Her Majesty answers this letter, and it is three months before she writes to thank him for his account of the manœuvres. When she does so, it is in a mood of depression. Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany, had died in the spring of 1884 and his widow and children had spent Christmas with her.

OSBORNE, Dec. 27, 1884.

"The Queen is quite shocked not to have answered Sir Howard Elphinstone's two most interesting letters of 23rd Sept. and the 1st Oct. but she hoped to see Sir Howard when he came back from Germany and never heard when he left again.

She has now to thank him for his last kind letter of the 15th instant.

. . . The Queen is glad that the Empress did not enter upon ticklish ground. She writes stiff and not very amiable letters to the Queen. She has never forgiven Princess Ella not marrying the Hereditary Grand Duke of Baden's son, and we have all suffered for it, and she is markedly unkind to the Crown Princess *never* mentioning her name even to the Queen which is not kind or friendly.

The Queen is fairly well and her powers of walking and standing are decidedly greatly improved.

But her spirits are gone ! She may appear for moments gay,

¹ The Duke and Duchess of Connaught were then in India.

but deep down in her heart there are unhealed wounds which will remain so while life here lasts. She cannot get over what she has gone through these last 2 years, and she has many worries and anxieties now which she will mention another day.

The darling children are well and very amusing. It will be terrible to part with them.

The Queen sends Sir Howard a card for the New Year painted *by hand*.

It makes quite a pretty little picture.

She wishes both to him and Lady Elphinstone a very happy New Year.

Our Christmas was very sad. The poor Duchess of Albany felt it dreadfully, but her courage and patience and unselfishness is marvellous. The children are very well and the little girl ¹ a lovely clever little thing, and the little boy quite strong and very like his dear father."

Meanwhile Elphinstone was at Berlin as attaché, spending there a busy winter. We have few letters of this date, but my mother kept an engagement book and also into a portfolio she flung reminiscences of their stay; invitations and programmes, Prince Bismarck's visiting-card, notices of the circus and fanciful menus; nothing of any importance, yet together giving a vivid picture of the time. The Emperor's cards of invitation were enormous things, bordered in gold, engraved with the Imperial Arms, Eagle, Crown and Scrolls, emblazoned in gold, and with a curiously inartistic drawing of the Kingly Palace below, the whole signed by Count Perponcher the Emperor's Hof-Marschall. The Crown Prince and Princess's invitation cards were quieter in appearance; the elaborate eagle, four-clawed and many-feathered, showing merely as a faint shadow beneath the black wording of the invitation itself, with Radolinski's flamboyant signature as an added decoration. Looking over these old programmes and invitation cards one can almost hear the soft rustle of silks and satins, the clank of swords, and the sharp heel-clicking of Prussian greetings. Hands encased in long kid gloves almost to the shoulders held, not jewelled bags as they would to-day, but fans, exquisite things of tortoiseshell and lace, of ivory intricately carved by Chinese hands, or of silk, painted with the fantasies of artists. Laughter and formal salutations, hurried glances and longing looks, all come to life once more, with the echo of waltzes by Strauss, and the

¹ Now Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone.

scent of candles, thousands of them on the walls and in chandeliers, flickering over diamonds and rubies, and ropes of pearls. They were brilliant pageants, those balls and concerts in the White Hall of the old Schloss. Even if Berlin could boast no great show of beauty—for the superfluous fat of all Prussians over the age of 30 tends to collect in unbecoming places—yet there were diplomats and foreign wives, daughters with the fresh bloom of youth, and a multitude of uniforms and medals to lend enchantment to the scene.

When they dined with the Emperor and Empress, the ladies were restricted to wearing dresses cut square at the neck. Her Majesty, the Empress Augusta, had been a beauty in her day, with fine features, auburn hair and a delicate complexion. Her fine features remained, her auburn hair was easy to renew, but her complexion, to retain its colour, had now to be made of enamel. And as in the year 1884 Augusta had only been enamelled *square*, no lady was permitted at her table to appear in a low dress that showed the circle of bare shoulder that her Imperial Majesty could no longer present.

Seven o'clock was the fashionable British hour for dinner, but five o'clock, on the contrary, was the German rule. This allowed time to go on to balls and receptions that started between 8 and 9, but it sometimes involved a double dinner, much food and considerable hurry, for one evening they dined with the Emperor at 5 o'clock, dined again with other diplomats at 7 and went on to the Crown Princess's Soirée at 8.30. At the British Embassy, that unattractive residence in the Wilhelmstrasse, Sir Edward Malet the new Ambassador, at this time still a bachelor, presided over an extremely happy contingent of young diplomats. Sir Edward was kindness itself to his juniors, who included at that time Charles Scott as counsellor, afterwards to become ambassador to Russia, and Rennell Rodd, a future ambassador to Italy, and later Lord Rennell of Rodd. With "Malet and all his young men" there were gay impromptu dinners, skating parties and amateur theatricals. Happy hours were spent at the Embassy, and Elphinstone's talent was put to use in its small theatre for which he painted a drop scene of Venice surrounded by ornate draperies of heavy fringed material, involving further careful studies, such as he had done for Aldershot.

Elphinstone wrote occasionally to Osborne :

HOTEL DE RUSSIE, BERLIN,

15 Dec. 1884.

"Sir Howard Elphinstone presents his most humble duty to Your Majesty and begs to state that he has had a long interview with the Empress, who received him most graciously and with many questions as to Your Majesty's state of health. . . .

The Empress in her usual manner discussed the various political states of Europe, and enlarged upon the blessing of the peaceful state of England in comparison to that of every other country, and she especially made most minute enquiries as to the expedition to Khartoum of General Gordon. She seemed thoroughly acquainted with all the names and positions along the Nile where our troops are encamped and earnestly hoped for a speedy succour of General Gordon.

No family matters of any kind were touched upon, so that Sir Howard had no difficulty whatever in answering every question.

The Emperor appears in excellent health and undoubtedly much stronger than he was last September. Two days ago he went out shooting, notwithstanding the cold snow, mist and rain, without however suffering in the least.

The weather here is far from pleasant, as the air is salty and heavy and the sky dark. London at this time of the year is certainly not worse than the air just now. . . . Sir Howard hopes Your Majesty's health is better."

At the close of the year he wrote :

". . . Nothing can exceed the kind consideration shown by the Crown Princess to Lady Elphinstone and Sir Howard. In so many little ways Her Royal Highness endeavours to make one feel as if this place was one's own home. Both he and Lady Elphinstone cannot be sufficiently grateful for this great attention shown to them."

It was entirely owing to the Crown Princess that the Elphinstones enjoyed their stay in Berlin. The rigid court functions held for them no attraction. They had nothing in common with the Prussian Junker mind, conventional and uneducated, and there were no others to be met at Court. The Crown Princess introduced the Elphinstones to the intellectual world of Berlin that would otherwise have been to them a closed book; artists, musicians and men of letters were among her friends. The nobility looked with horror at this mixing of the classes, and would

not tolerate graciously such an invasion into society, ground that they considered as theirs alone by right of birth.

"With whom were you dining before you came on here this evening?" asked a noble Countess of Sir Howard at a Court reception one night. "With those delightful artists the—" he replied, "Do you not know them?" Whereupon becoming rigid with indignation, she said icily, "You should realise, Sir Howard, that were you in Berlin anything but *temporarily*, you would have to choose between knowing THEM and knowing US."

One letter only remains of this period, written home from my mother on Christmas Day.

Perhaps one of the Crown Princess's most endearing qualities to her friends was her realisation of their needs. Their stay in Berlin meant for the Elphinstones that they would be absent from their children at Christmas for the first time. No mere expensive present sent to an hotel could ease the homesickness that my mother was bound to feel, therefore they must dine with the Crown Princess and her family privately, and share in the family "trees" and festivities.

HOTEL DE RUSSIE.

Christmas Day.

"... Our Christmas eve was not so lonely as we expected it to be—as the Crown Prince and Princess asked us to go there to dinner—which we did at 5 o'clock. It was rather a big affair of all their own family, and the whole household. Howard and I however were the only outsiders— After dinner we all went into another big room where the Christmas trees were—a huge long table with a big Christmas tree at each end of it and all the presents laid out on the table with something for everybody and a quantity of things for us. The Crown Princess gave us an old deep brass bowl with St. George and the Dragon on it—and Howard a painted plaque, beside some little gold pins from the little Princesses—some etchings and a lot of toys for the children, which I shall keep to bring home with me, so as to see how they like them. There is one, a kind of musical box which when you play sets a bell ringing and a woman dancing and a water wheel turning. I am sure they will think this very wonderful. I think it was very good of them having us in like that. When we got back to the hotel we found the Proprietor had put us a tree in the sitting room, and a large tray of fruit and sweets—the effect I suppose of our having had to see all the servants all round.

By the way, at the Crown Princess's by everybody's packets on

the table was a large plateful of apples, nuts and different kinds of gingerbread—which has always to be given—and they would not consider it Christmas without it.

This evening we are dining at the Embassy. . . .”

Nearly sixty years later the musical box still holds its sway over new generations ; the painted mountains and lakes are unfaded and the little lady is ready at the turning of the handle to dance as freshly as ever on the grass beside her. Enchanted hours have been spent by children and grandchildren making the church bell ring and the tinsel water tumble, while a gay tune from a long-forgotten operetta plays on unflatteringly.

. It was from Berlin rather than Windsor that came the bulk of Elphinstone's royal letters during the next year or two. Queen Victoria had written to him in the autumn of 1884 an outline of the love affair between Princess Victoria of Germany and Prince Alexander of Battenberg. The young couple were sincerely in love, the match was approved of by Queen Victoria, but Bismarck stood in the way. During Elphinstone's months at the Embassy, the Crown Princess evidently confided to him some of her difficulties, one of which was the impossibility of using ordinary methods of correspondence with Prince Alexander ; letters between Sofia and Berlin must go by secret ways. The system of internal espionage by which the Nazis have terrorised their own and other countries is not new in Germany, “ Bismarck has his spies everywhere,” wrote Queen Victoria to Elphinstone, when some of Prince Arthur's private affairs were unaccountably known to the Chancellor.

The first letter from the Crown Princess on this subject was written when Elphinstone was still at Berlin.

Jan. 30, 1885.

“ DEAR SIR HOWARD,

How can you send the enclosed to its place of destination *safe* from here ? You know the *Post* is not to be *trusted*, and it must go *SAFE*. Could it not go as a letter from you to the English minister at Sofia or is it not *safe*. I wonder whether they watch what letters you write at your hotel ? Please direct the letter to Prince Henry of Battenberg——. Oh and alas all our hopes are at an end and I am quite miserable.

Yours most sincerely and in great distress

V. C. PRS. & PSS. R.

(Victoria, Crown Princess and Princess Royal).

You must ask Pce. Henry of B. merely to *let YOU know* by *Post* that he has received your *letter* as I shall be in terrible anxiety."

Some weeks later she wrote :

"DEAR SIR HOWARD,

I *cannot* tell you the infinite relief it was to get your letter and the *enclosed* ; which *did* bring one little ray of *sunshine* and of *HOPE* though it is *but faint*. Still it took a *load* off my mind. This I owe to *you*, or I should never have had it ! You would have been repaid if you had seen my poor child's tears of gratitude ! *Now ALL* depends on long patience and on *PERFECT* silence ! No *ONE* of my *FAMILY*, *no one* *HERE* either *IN* or out of the House must guess, that there is the *slightest* chance, or all will again be spoilt, and *then*—for ever ! *NONE* of *HIS* family must guess it either ! For *them* and for the rest of the world the thing must be ' over and done with ' altogether. . . .

You are the only person who knows this and I know the secret is safe with you."

For two years after this the correspondence to Prince Alexander was sent under cover to Elphinstone to forward, and each time the Crown Princess herself wrote to Sir Howard. Occasionally considerable time passed without a letter, sometimes they followed each other every day or two. There is much similarity in their pages, whether they are written from Berlin, Potsdam, Baveno or Venice—an agony of suspense until it is known that the packages have arrived in safety ; friendly talk on family questions, and much discussion of politics. Although peace reigned during most of this time, yet such precautions had to be taken to prevent Russia or Prince Bismarck hearing of the existence of these packages, that sometimes a letter would take several months in arriving at its destination. A friend perhaps would be travelling to Paris, and there hand a letter for Sir Howard into Embassy keeping, from where it went to London by Queen's Messenger. Then its journey was but half accomplished and Elphinstone by some means other than the post had to convey it to Sofia. Phrases such as the following come frequently into the letters from Berlin :

" I KNOW that *telegrams* ARE bought and stolen, why should it not be possible with letters in times such as these. . . ."

and

" Until one knows that a letter is safe one feels in a perfect fever. . . ."

" . . . There are many who would be only too glad to seize it if they could—the very thought makes me tremble! . . ."

" . . . PRAY if it is *not* safe to send the last letter . . . *do not do it*, as not *the slightest* risk must be *run*. . . . Many many thanks for all the trouble you have taken, I am really so ashamed to bother you like this! You will be wishing us *all to Jericho*! . . ."

Sometimes the letters are a mere cry of agonised suspense; at other times in a calmer mood, the Princess writes about art, of her pleasure at being in Venice, etc. :

" . . . *How I wish* you were both here! Should we not enjoy ourselves. . . . Count Seckendorff has been doing some charming views. I, alas, have been very unsuccessful, I had so many letters to write and things to see to. 'Meissonier' is next door to us and paints all day long, but one cannot venture to go and see him, as he is an odd queer, rude man—and a 'Germanophobe' besides. . . . The longer one stays the *more* one likes it, and the more nooks of interest and beauty one discovers, it is a dear, bewitching place. . . ."

Back in Berlin in the winter, she wrote of how she wished the Elphinstones were there, as they had been the previous Christmas.

March 5, '68.

" . . . I thought so much of you two nights ago when I went to dine for the *1st time* at the Embassy, and after dinner first saw your pretty drop scene on the little stage! How charming it is—and I am never tired of looking at beloved Venice! . . . Here we are having the longest winter one can remember . . . deep snow, all trains delayed and the ice is still 2 feet thick in places."

She wrote on hearing of the birth of Princess Patricia of Connaught :

"We are delighted at the good news of the dear little girl's appearance at Buckingham Palace! on St. Patrick's day too."

Later comes her joy at the prospect of a visit to England—disappointment at not being able to be present at the christening at Bagshot and then :

"It is like a sweet pleasant dream to think I have been 12 days in dear beloved England, and that I have seen so many dear faces again! It was *too* short and most tantalising to rush away again in such a hurry."

On Politics she writes :

“ In Germany I am a good liberal, and in England I am a liberal *Chauviniste* ! I hold Prof. Lecky’s doctrine as to the *expansion of England* ! Lesser Britain *must* be ready to defend GREATER Britain or she will injure herself in every way. . . .”

In nearly every letter she touches on politics both European and English, commenting on all the fluctuating matters of the day which are dull reading sixty years later to all except those especially interested in that period. Russia was then the power which held Europe in a state of perpetual anxiety, and Russia as well as Bismarck held the keys to her daughter’s happiness.

Nov. 16.

“ . . . The Russians have been spreading the report of my daughter’s engagement everywhere in order to do as much mischief as they can ! The Emperor and Prince Bismarck have again alluded to the *subject* as a political impossibility as of course they would at the present moment ! Therefore one must be doubly cautious !”

So the letters go on ; hope gradually dying out that a marriage would be possible. The love affair came to an unhappy end. Russia suppressed Prince Alexander’s attempt to make Bulgaria a free country, and in August 1886 the Prince was kidnapped at Sofia, taken to Russia and compelled to abdicate at the pistol’s point. During the Emperor Frederick’s short reign, Bismarck again intervened over the renewed question of the engagement, and with the Emperor’s death all hope for his daughter’s happy marriage came to an end.

CHAPTER XXXVIII : ENCHANTED AUTUMN

IN the autumn of 1886 the Crown Princess planned a holiday by the shores of the Mediterranean where she and her three girls with Count Seckendorff and a lady-in-waiting would be joined by the Crown Prince after German manœuvres were over. She wrote to Elphinstone :

“ . . . Will you or can you meet us ? the first or second week in September. How very nice it would be.”

Then followed a month of holiday. They were a household of friends, with congenial interests; there were no tiring functions to attend, no tiresome folk to whom they must be civil. There was bathing under perfect conditions, small boats and launches ready for expeditions and unknown villages and stretches of countryside to explore. If the Crown Prince's cough sounded a note of warning that was afterwards remembered, at the time it went unheeded:

"The sketchers sketched" in perfect surroundings, to their heart's content. There is a land-locked harbour tucked into a peninsula of Mediterranean coastline that catches the imagination of many who visit it. Even in this century when the chatter of voices on the piazza is marred by discordant notes of the foreign tourist, this disturbing element cannot altogether destroy the charm of the place. Sixty years ago when the only access was by water, the tourist hardly existed. For painters it is a paradise. They spent sunny mornings by the harbour where fishing boats were drying their nets; a breeze would turn the water into kaleidoscopic reflections of tall houses, spears of emerald and rose, interwoven with clear shafts of fallen sky. All a painter's coloured words sang out, ultramarine, cobalt and deep viridian, aureoline, sienna and ash of rose. Other days they would climb by zig-zag paths to the precipitous castle terraces and from there look back over cypress and olive across the bay to a background of hills laid in by Perugino. Or they would spend afternoons out on the sun-scorched promontory where the scent of pine needles and myrtles filled the air and reflected light steals all the shadows. There, laying aside paint and brushes, it was enough merely to gaze down on distorted shapes of rock looming up like pillars of malachite through the translucent waves. Then after a day of painting they watched the moonlight change the coloured picture to black and white. Lights from villages along the coast shone as though they were a diamond necklace laid upon dark velvet; the tower of San Giorgio seen through the black pines by the garden gate looked carved out of snow though the rocks below were still warm to the touch. The sky was drained of stars—fallen perhaps into the sea to lie in myriads among waters of molten silver.

The days slipped by like a string of jewels. It was a lovely ending to a friendship whose radiance only death could dim.

VILLA CARNARVON, PORTOFINO.

Oct. 10, 1886.

“DEAR SIR HOWARD,

. . . Let me say once more how *very* sorry we are to part with you both kind friends! It was so very nice to have you here! As for me, I feel low spirited, you know how I cling to my old friends, and to those of the Land of my Birth! I am only afraid you must have *been* bored sometimes having no other society but ours! Still the spot is so beautiful that a true lover of nature can never be bored, and you have not half exhausted its charms—or its treasures of beautiful views.

Would that air Castles could turn into Bricks and Mortar by enchantment and without money, and that you could spend a little time each year with me perched in my Castle high up on the rocks—amongst the olives and pines, over the deep blue sea—with the distant hills—and their circle of bright houses and villages at their foot to look at, and the soft air blowing around one. It would be *very* nice! The children send Lady Elphinstone their love in which I join and remain,

Yours, most sincerely,

V. Crown Princess & Princess Royal.”

CHAPTER XXXIX: THE DEATH OF THE EMPEROR FREDERICK

SEVENTEEN months later, on March 9th, 1888, the Emperor William I of Germany died at the age of 91. The Crown Princess, who then became known as the Empress Victoria, was in the midst of tragedy for her husband lay dying of cancer.

The Crown Prince, on ascending the throne as Emperor Frederick, wrote a remarkable message to Bismarck, setting forth his ideas for future government and ending with the sentence:

“May I be destined thus to lead Germany and Prussia in a course of peaceful development to new honours. . . . Not caring for the splendour of great deeds, not striving for glory, I shall be satisfied if it be one day said of my rule that it was

beneficial to my people, useful to my Country and a blessing to the Empire."

Ninety-eight days afterwards the Emperor Frederick died and the hope of Germany enjoying an enlightened Government died with him.

The Elphinstones were returning from a visit to India ; my mother was shortly expecting another child. The Queen, on her way to Florence, wrote from on board the *Victoria and Albert* thanking Elphinstone for a number of letters and sketches, adding :

" . . . She is distressed to think of Lady Elphinstone exposed to so much fatigue under such circumstances and the Queen only hopes that the sea voyage may not be too much for her. . . . The accounts of the dear Emperor Frederick are very sad and make one very anxious. Pray thank Lady Elphinstone for her kind letter. . . ."

From Florence the Queen wrote again :

VILLA PALMIERI, *April 9, 1888.*

"The Queen has to thank Sir Howard Elphinstone for several kind and interesting letters, of the 9th March from Bombay, from off Suez, from Marseilles and two from Buckingham Palace. . . .

The news from Berlin do not report much progress. Alas ! William behaves *outrageously* ! All this must worry the dear Emperor, and is a great anxiety to the dear Empress Victoria, and not less so to the Queen.

Pray thank Lady Elphinstone for her kind letter.

We are in the greatest admiration of Florence, its splendid buildings and treasures of Art, and of the lovely Country."

Prince William, later to be known to a whole generation of Englishmen as "the Kaiser," certainly did not behave during his father's illness and his mother's bereavement in such a way as to call forth approval from any but a Prussian. One of Elphinstone's first duties on returning from India was to travel to Berlin to attend the funeral of the Emperor Frederick who had died on June 15th. By letters he told his wife little of what he then learnt, but the knowledge she gained on his return made it difficult for her in after life to speak with restraint about the behaviour at this time of Kaiser Wilhelm II.

HOTEL ROYAL, BERLIN.

Monday (June 1888).

“ DEAREST DARLING,

Although we had a special train all the way from London we did not reach here until 11.30 p.m. last night. We had a dreadful wet journey. Regular hail storms all the way and we found the same to-day. But fortunately it cleared up and remained fine until the close of the ceremony. A special train left for Wildpark at 9 a.m. and thence carriages to Friedrichskrone where the body was lying in the long saloon next to and beyond the Neuschetsaal. The Palace was crowded to excess ; thence the procession started down the avenue through the Parc to the church in Potsdam. The whole of this was lined with troops, but the people had been prevented from entering. The bands played chiefly the old German chorale “ Was Gott thut, das ist gut.” The effect very fine. The service in the church was very short, impressive and quiet, nothing could be better ; and then after a cold lunch at the Schloss at Potsdam we separated.

After the service the Emperor (William II) knelt down before the coffin of his father, and then the King of Saxony, the Prince of Wales, etc., and these were followed by the Princess of Wales and the present Empress, the Grand Duchess of Baden and others. The Empress Victoria and her 3 daughters did not come to Church but watched the procession going along the long avenue from one of the upper windows at Friedrichskrone.

It must have been a heartrending moment for all of them. . . . No one seems to have any idea when we are to leave, but probably not till Wednesday. I hope, however, we may do so tomorrow. We have already sent a messenger to Seckendorff to ascertain whether the Empress Victoria has any commands for us, and if a negative reply comes, we start tomorrow. In any case I will telegraph tomorrow when we leave.

The Empress is I hear quite beside herself and will not see anyone. Poor woman, it will be a very hard life for her. What she will do or where she will live none of us can find out. Most probably she is quite unable to decide herself as yet.

I trust you are taking care of yourself and have the fine weather to drive daily.

Ever your own, H.E.”

BERLIN, 19th June, '88.

"We are now waiting for the train to take us to Potsdam to see the Empress and I trust it will not last long; it will be a most painful affair.

After that we are to see the young Emperor and the old Empress Augusta is to be called upon. So far as I know our work is then over and we can return to England. . . . Just returned from Potsdam and I am glad the interview is over. Ponsonby and I were the only ones who had private interviews with her and she certainly broke down with me. Poor woman, she is much to be pitied, all the more as Seckendorff told me that immediately after the old Emperor's death (William I), the old noblesse knowing that her husband could not live beyond July took liberties which they would not have done otherwise.

She spoke most kindly of you and said how pleased they all were at hearing of the birth of the child and that the Emperor was most anxious that his kindest wishes should be conveyed to you.

However I will not write further but say all that passed.

Ever your own. H.E."

Elphinstone was struck by the inhuman behaviour of many of those around the Empress Frederick and he was not alone in these views. The Queen in her journal noted :

"June 25.—Very stifling, steamy heat. Down to Frogmore for breakfast. Sir Howard Elphinstone, who had been to Berlin, came to see me, and talked of the many disagreeables, poor dear Vicky had to go through, which are very disgraceful and so cruel at such time. Received a very sad letter from her, sending me precious souvenirs.

June 26.—Took tea at Frogmore and Bertie, who only returned last night, joined us there. He was very much and sadly impressed by all he had seen of poor darling Vicky's terrible distress.

It was most painful to see, but she became quite calm between whiles. She was not ill, nor looking ill, wonderful to say. She had met with a great deal of ingratitude, and there had been terrible intrigues, altogether her position was most difficult and sad."

Did the untimely death of the Emperor Frederick change the whole course of history?

We know that the German can respond wholeheartedly to a leader whose ideas are those of the devil ; can we imagine the Prussian being led with the same enthusiasm in the ways of tolerance and kindliness ? During the Franco-Prussian war, while still Crown Prince, Frederick had written " Bismarck has made us great and powerful but he has robbed us of our friends, the sympathies of the world, and—our conscience. I still hold fast to the conviction that Germany, without blood and without iron, simply by the justice of her cause, could make moral conquests, and, united, become free and powerful. A preponderance of quite another kind than that gained by mere force of arms was within our reach, for German culture, German science, and German genius must have won us respect, love and—honour. The insolent brutal ' Junker ' willed it otherwise."

Prophetic words.

CHAPTER XL : INDIAN INTERLUDE

IN the autumn of 1887 the Elphinstones went with the Duke and Duchess of Connaught to India. From the first moment of landing at Bombay the beauty of the East laid hold on Elphinstone and every possible moment was given to paint and pencil. His work was mostly fragmentary ; he sketched the harbour crowded with shipping and craft of all shapes and sizes ; he sketched the small boats and their boatmen, sometimes using the back of a formal invitation card on his way to some function, telling of that urgency of desire that will not be denied. He made notes in the teeming streets of Bombay, of low-balconied houses whose shuttered windows kept out the noise of creaking bullock waggons and the chattering of many different castes and races ; he tried to get on to paper that perfect balance of the twin weight at each end of a bamboo pole carried across the shoulders of a coolie ; he drew the water carriers and the small boys absorbed in games. Roughly he noted down the pose of a seller of food and from his sketch-book we learn how gracefully a tray laden with fruit is balanced on a hand close to a turbaned head ; he brings to life again the passing moment in the quick turn of a woman swathed in a golden sari ; the gleaming rows of tents of the Duke's encampment near Bombay

become a background to intricate branches of banyan trees. From a hurried brush we learn the contours of hills alongside the railway to Poona and see the level mountain-tops flush pink in the dawn, their sharp gullies deep in shadow. Arrived at Poona he had more leisure. Absorbingly he noted how the twisting roots of luxuriant vegetation held together a ruined pavilion in some long-deserted garden ; there was time to make studies of the bearer and the kitmagar, posed in all the glory of royal livery. With careful detail he could paint a vendor of gorgeous silks spreading his wares upon a veranda in the compound, enticing a lady in grey to make a generous selection. In the garden of the Old Residency he made superb studies, first in pencil and then with paint, of the form and colour of banana bushes—smooth leaves young and immaculate or torn into a thousand ribbons by wind, revealing the entire range of green from palest lime to deepest jade.

They found that the name of Elphinstone was not unhonoured in India and when they went on a few weeks' leave sightseeing many doors were opened and they were given opportunity to see all they wished. The words scribbled in the sketch-books tell of their journeys—Hyderabad, Agra, Delhi, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Bijapoor, etc. Here their movements were not always by rail ; on a rough sheet we find jerky strokes showing jungle and fellow travellers on elephants, drawn with an uncertain line telling of unaccustomed motion. There was sightseeing in historic places, passing through dark archways of temples to glaring light outside, or looking down marble steps to water in which were reflected domes and pavilions in magic Rajput colouring. Humbly he made careful transcriptions of flowing ornaments in the Pearl Mosque or the Golden Temple—arabesques of exotic flowers in inlay—noting alongside the colouring of red and gold and grey and gold. Then swiftly after concentrated work in new conditions, with grown assurance suddenly realised, he does a sketch at dawn of a vision of pale palaces, twice beautiful in the still waters at their feet.

As usual, he sent sketches back to Osborne, hoping that their roughness and want of finish would be excused.

“ . . . There is a great field here for an artist ; at every corner one sees pictures perfectly composed for one with a richness of colouring and depth of light and shade far surpassing anything one can see in Europe.”

Their days were busy. They visited Rajahs and inspected royal tigers (behind perilously insecure bars my mother considered with an unpleasant sinking feeling). Elphinstone wrote to the Queen from Delhi: "He is very gratified to hear that the rough sketches are approved and hopes to send some more shortly. Sir Howard and Lady Elphinstone have had a most interesting trip through Benares, Lucknow, Cawnpore, Lahore and Amritsar and have been very much struck by the vastness of the country and the dense population everywhere. It is only by coming here that one realises what an immense country it is and what a variety of different types of people it contains, different in manners, customs, speech, physique and in costume. This northern part especially contains magnificent men. Sir Howard never saw finer soldiers anywhere. . . ."

Their eyes were opened to things that they might otherwise have missed by Mr. Lockwood Kipling, with whom Elphinstone had been in correspondence over the decoration of the billiard room at Bagshot Park. Few Englishmen can ever have understood Indian art better than did Rudyard Kipling's father, who was curator of the museum at Lahore. Not everybody cares for the multiplicity of pattern where the luxuriance of tropical jungle is translated into a flowing rhythm of twisting stem and swaying branch and an endless invention of design that seems to rival the forest itself. Not everyone can appreciate the daring when scarlet plum and old rose are flung together by a master hand. But Elphinstone was an apt pupil and even after a few months the things that he was able to bring home gave his children an idea of colour that seemed to belong to fairyland. Brocades of deepest salmon woven thickly through with threads of pure gold and silver, yet supple to the hand; embroideries of gorgeous tints stitched till the silk on which they were worked had almost disappeared; fine muslins of scarlet printed with silver peacocks and grass-green gauze dotted with innumerable little emblems of the tree of life. He brought a miniature or two of long-forgotten rajahs glittering with jewels; he brought enamels from the master hands of craftsmen at Jaipur, bracelets with dragons' heads wrought in crimson, green and blue, their tongues and eyes of rubies and flat diamonds.

Back at Poona, he writes to the Queen descriptions of the country, the cantonment and later of the Duke's camp, gay with flags. He tells Her Majesty how happy are the royal children, out of doors the greatest part of the day. Princess Patricia was

"vigorous and talks pretty freely. A great favourite of hers is my wife whom she calls Epite. . . . Lady Elphinstone felt rather shy at first about writing to Your Majesty, but Sir Howard persuaded her to do so." My mother's letters to the Queen, the first of many, contained pleasant details of their everyday life; of the unusual flowers that would at home be hothouse plants; of the Duchess and how "Nothing could exceed her kindness to Lady Elphinstone even in the smallest trifles she shows a consideration and forethought that is most touching." Princess Margaret was enjoying riding and drawing. "As for the youngest Princess everybody thinks her quite charming, her fascinating way of making friends with every stranger is certainly very pretty. She is devoted to music and continually induces the Duchess to go to the piano and play to her."

From a less formal letter home, written to her brother Alfred, she tells of the friendly atmosphere in the compound; the meals were cheerful and sometimes included episodes not reported to Windsor. One evening soon after their arrival my mother was the subject of much chaff as she announced she had never in her life seen a bug. A short time after they had all separated for the night the Duchess's bearer arrived at her tent. On a salver he handed to her a small velvet box intended to hold jewels, inside which lay three fresh corpses.

The Elphinstones saw only the delightful side of India. They had no experience of the hot weather; no sudden and ghastly epidemics came their way, like the cholera that five years later was to strike down her soldier brother after an illness of only an hour or two. They were not condemned to tedious months in one place or years of separation from their children. Yet on this last point they could see the effect of tragedy on those among whom they stayed. Elphinstone returned to this subject in letters to the Queen, the question on which earlier Her Majesty had differed with him. He wrote in February:

17th February 1888.

". . . Your Majesty will have heard from the Duke and Duchess respecting the children, and they have talked to Sir Howard about keeping out here the youngest (Princess Victoria Patricia). He fears Your Majesty may not quite approve of this, but at the same time he thinks there are some reasons which make it preferable for them to keep her.

There can be no doubt that a lady's life out here is a very

trying one, more especially during the summer months in the hills. Having no regular occupation like a man, and being frequently left alone for days by themselves, they are necessarily forced—unless some other humanising element is present—either to make pleasure their principal object or else to shut themselves up, thus giving way to selfish ideas and thoughts which hardens a character more or less.

As the Duchess in her position cannot make intimate friendships out here, and the Duke must be constantly away for several days at a time on duty, the presence of a child would be most desirable and it would give the Duchess both that occupation and interest which is so essential. The presence of the children out here has already produced a marked effect upon the Duchess and made her so much more bright and cheerful than Sir Howard has ever seen her. He feels sure, therefore that the sudden withdrawal of all of them would be most trying to her. As regards the climate, Sir Howard has made many enquiries, and from what he hears, he can see no reason why it should harm Princess Victoria Patricia. She has kept so wonderfully well and is so very active and strong.

Sir Howard trusts that the next mail will bring good news of the Crown Prince. All this anxiety must be very trying to Your Majesty."

The last letter he wrote from India, dated 9th March, thanked the Queen for her permission to keep the youngest Princess in India.

One of the last photographs taken of him was done at this time, showing him seated on the ground with his arm round the waist of a lovely small person, the pair utterly absorbed, the world well forgotten. Behind them pose a self-conscious group of royalties and officials with native servants holding painted palm fans, all uncomfortably waiting till the misery of photography be over. But the pair in front are unaware. On his knee is an open sketch-book and in her tightly clutched hand is a stubby pencil. Her Royal Highness Princess Victoria Patricia of Connaught, not yet two, and Sir Howard Elphinstone, V.C., aged nearly 60, were under the spell of their mutual passion, art. Their study was not without result. Dated some months later we find mounted with care in one of the volumes of Confidential Papers, among documents from Viceroys, Prime Ministers and Secretaries of State, a coloured drawing; this drawing is

the earliest to obtain recognition of the many works of art of outstanding merit by Princess Victoria Patricia. Several rows of blue mountains in exciting outline are drawn one above the other across the page ; at their feet lie the waves of a scarlet sea, well known to the artist on her outward journey and evidently recollected from a rough passage. In the words of to-day the whole might be described as "carried out in modern idiom with a keen though archaic sense of colour." In case the underlying meaning should not be understood by the recipient at Windsor another hand has written below, "She said it was all love and kisses for dear Gan-Gan."

On their return to England a disappointment was in store for the Elphinstones. Writing from Poona in March "Sir Howard deeply regrets to state that they expect an addition to their family the latter part of May"—and on Trinity Sunday he "begged to state that his wife presented him with a daughter early this morning about 12.30 a.m. It is not a large child but very strong and healthy and wonderfully quiet and is doing very well indeed. The child promises to be fair haired. Lady Elphinstone is much disappointed at its not being a boy." He was optimistic about the hair, which though it did come later, was for two years conspicuous for its absence ; so he had plenty of opportunity to study the phrenology of the child, with which he was pleased ; but he said that in looks the infant was exactly like the wooden statue of the "Sheik-el-Beled" in the Cairo Museum. This famous figure, dating from the IVth Dynasty, is one of the earliest in existence and its beauty is visible more to the archæologist than to the ordinary mortal.

CHAPTER XLI : THE GARDEN

THE remainder of 1888 Elphinstone spent mostly at Pine-wood. From letters to his wife before he joined her and the children at Robin Hood's Bay, during a summer holiday, we see him in a new light, that of landed proprietor, and realise how great is the difference between tenancy and ownership. All his geese were swans. Never were flowers so beautiful or grass so luxuriant. The orchard promised a wonderful crop, the

farming was going well, the horses were excellent. He wrote in August :

" . . . The small green meadow beyond the kitchen garden looked so fine that I told Sumner to let Montague have a run in it. You ought to have seen him, he galloped up and down kicking his heels up and thoroughly enjoying it. He looked remarkably handsome and it seemed almost a shame to put him to cart work. . . .

The new horses were tested at a field day by the groom and stood the fire capitally and didn't mind the rushing in of the soldiers at the charge. That is most satisfactory."

Burden, the gardener at the Park, came to advise on pruning the old orchard and other garden problems :

" . . . As regards the roses, he says that if you wish to have a fine crop in September we should remove at once every single rose bud on the bushes. So I have begun this morning. It seems almost cruel to pluck off these buds which are now in perfection as to shape and free from insects."

By the end of the next day he calculated he had picked off between three and four thousand buds. One hopes indeed that September compensated for his labours. The rose garden where he had spent so much time lay at the end of a path bordered by yew trees and surrounded by the orchard. The formal rose-beds had an edging of brown pottery tiles between them and the gravel paths ; there were iron trellis arches up which were planted such climbing roses as Cheshunt Hybrid and Madame Alfred Carriere, whose scent has never been surpassed. The rest of the garden had been laid out with care ; winding paths were cut through the heather bordering a tidy croquet lawn, and there were many flower-beds shaped in curious patterns to be filled with geraniums and cherry pie and neatly edged with lobelia and fleshy-leaved sedum. The Elphinstones planted Welling-tonias, deodars and variegated holly and did not omit a *Pinus Insignis*. They also experimented with such unusual things as eucalyptus, mimosa and *Cotonus rhus*, and they spread the garden with small azaleas. Against the house, instead of the ivy and virginia creeper so loved at that time, they put wistaria, jasmine, clematis and more roses, roses in quantities, Gloire de Dijon and

Maréchal Niel, and that old-fashioned pink "monthly" that flowers continuously for more than half the year.

The rose garden held one unusual memory for my mother. Her Majesty was not always easy to serve and on one occasion her commands had the result of making my mother rage inwardly against her husband. A certain lady had been asked by the Duchess of Connaught to go with her to India as lady-in-waiting. She was delighted; but Her Majesty told Sir Howard that she disapproved of the selection and he must tell the lady that her going to India would not be sanctioned. The Elphinstones asked her to Pinewood to lunch to break the news. When the meal was over and coffee finished, Elphinstone proposed a visit to the rose garden, and as they walked away from the house he suddenly looked at his watch, gave an exclamation of horror and holding out his hand said, "Can you forgive me? I'd quite forgotten an appointment and I must rush away." With a suppressed grin at my mother he fled—and left her to do the dirty work.

During this solitary time at Pinewood one thing alone was a worry. He was unwell, and to save himself the exertion of finishing the few remaining panels of arabesque work before they were put in place in the library, he acquired the services of an "artist." This artist does not appear to have been a very gifted person and to watch someone doing clumsily and slowly what he himself could do so swiftly and well was almost more than Elphinstone could bear. Finally the artist "who has done almost *nothing*" departed in high dudgeon to Devonshire and Elphinstone finished the panels. Perhaps for once, watching incompetent workmanship, his kindness and self-control gave way to an outburst of irritation.

One small touch is revealing. After seeing off the family to the seaside he wrote:

"... By the bye, I really believe my gold pencil is gone at last. I lent it in the train to the children and quite forgot to ask them for it before leaving the train; so I suppose it got left there."

Next day he says:

"... I am so sorry I spoke about the pencil case. I found it afterwards in my greatcoat pocket. I hope the children were not reproved on my account. But if they were, say how sorry I am."

We hear once more of Mr. Kipling. Lunch at Pinewood was to be the prelude to a final discussion about the Duke's billiard-room, but Elphinstone writes: "he missed his train at Woking where he says he waited reading a book and forgot all about it." An uncongenial spot one would have thought—Woking Junction—to the illustrator of *Kim*.

The royal letters of 1888 bear a curious likeness to those of the early 'sixties. They tell of nurses and governesses, doctors and drill sergeants and all the youthful routine, this time for grandchildren. Elphinstone's letters to the Queen were not quite so frequent as they had been in the old days in spite of the fact that the "hooping cough" makes its appearance again; but twenty-five years had elapsed and on this occasion no princely croak is permitted to disturb the playhouses and horticultural pavilions of London. A more up-to-date medical regime ordered that the patients should be virtually imprisoned in the grounds of Buckingham Palace, to the indignation of a devoted grandmother waiting with open doors at Windsor.

WINDSOR CASTLE.

Saturday night, 12.5.1888.

"The Queen would be very grateful if Sir Howard could come over tomorrow (Sunday) between 1 and 2 o'clock to meet Sir W. Jenner, as she fears Dr. Laking is making difficulties about letting the dear children come *here*, which they and Chapman (the nurse) are longing to do. . . . Change of air *stops* the cough more than anything. . . . The air is warmer and far better here than London. When our children had the whooping-cough they were moved from place to place and finally *lost* their cough by going to Scotland. The Queen considers that *she* has charge of the children in the absence of their parents; after her, Sir Howard Elphinstone, and she hopes he will support Sir William Jenner and herself in urging their coming here on Monday or Tuesday. They could stay on here and *follow* the Queen to Scotland when it gets warmer. The poor little things are begging to come and the Queen is *longing* to have them.

The house is quite warm.

It is *preposterous* to let them go out twice a day and drive out and say they cannot come here."

Good air was still good air and it needed a brave man to stand up to Queen Victoria's indignation and her verdict of *preposterous*. It is comforting to know that this sentence did

not annihilate Dr. Laking and that he survived to be Court Physician to several sovereigns. But was it Elphinstone's handling of the situation that enabled Princess Margaret and Prince Arthur two days later to be pronounced well enough to travel to Windsor?

In the autumn came the question—not the first time it had arisen—should the Elphinstones take the children out to their parents in India? Elphinstone was unwell and had to have a small operation. Telegrams came frequently from Balmoral to Bagshot, sometimes twice a day, about his health. He clung to the idea that he and his wife would be able to go to India, but finally almost at the last moment he had to admit he was not well enough. It was a great disappointment, though he little realised he would never again see his Prince.

CHAPTER XLII : GOVERNMENT HOUSE, DEVONPORT

LIEUTENANT JOHN COWELL had been right when in 1857 he wrote that if Elphinstone “left his Corps for an indefinite period he would on his return find himself in a very much lower position.” Sir Howard had indeed dropped many years in seniority behind his contemporaries; but in January 1887 he was promoted Major-General, and in April 1889 he was appointed to the command of the Western District, with his headquarters at Devonport.

Then followed a busy year. Devonport was Elphinstone's first independent command; at Aldershot he had been in a subordinate position. Now he himself was the General; it spelt success in his military life and might perhaps have led to greater things; for the Commander-in-Chief was shortly to write of him as “destined to have before him a brilliant career.” He could with reason look to a number of years still ahead of active employment.

In the meanwhile Devonport gave him plenty of work. His military duties consisted of two main branches, administrative work in the office, and inspection—of the coastal defences of Plymouth and other ports, the troops of the garrison and the

regimental depots scattered throughout the district. The army's share of coast defences was larger then than at present, for the submarine mining defence of harbours which is now carried out by the Navy was in those days the responsibility of a special branch of the R.E. who were equipped with their own launches, boats, wharves, and storehouses. Smooth working between the soldiers and the navy was essential and depended much on the personality of the two Commanders; in Admiral Sir William Dowell, Elphinstone found a man with whom he could not only work harmoniously but who with his family was to become a lasting friend.

One special joy for the children was their father's official barge, rowed by twelve oarsmen. In this they often accompanied him when he called upon some battleship, the salutes watched for keenly and no less so their acknowledgement of twelve lifted oars. During one call on a newly arrived Russian warship, while Elphinstone was on board visiting the admiral, some younger officers invited his daughters to the wardroom, where later they were all found chattering French. Another childish recollection is of a game of hide and seek played with their father during lunch hour in the office of Government House and of the horrified expression of a young clerk who returned unexpectedly to find the General on hands and knees dodging behind a desk. The West Country did not belie its reputation for hospitality; doors were opened and remained open to my mother for the rest of her life: Mount Edgcumbe, the Winter Villa, Port Eliot and Bosahan, etc., became household words in the family. Hospitality was expected also from the General and few couples could have been better qualified to make this successful; in one way they did more than their predecessors, for schoolroom and nursery had not been usual at Government House and children's dances were a pleasant addition to other entertainments.

If Elphinstone ever looked back over his life had he reason to be satisfied? He had achieved a happy measure of success in his own career. He had had an ideal married life. He saw his Prince respected by all who ever heard of him and loved by all who knew him.

We have watched the carefree subaltern change into a serious young man. We have seen him calmly threading his way through the difficulties of dealing tactfully with his superiors, planning ahead for his young charge with wisdom unusual in one of his

years. We find him self-effacing, but not with want of personality ; efficient, but with the efficiency of a peacemaker, not of one who leaves a different kind of trouble behind ; keen and with driving power in spite of much ill health ; silent when necessary but no stumbler with words when he so wished. Stern with himself and infinitely tolerant with others, observant and quick at detecting humbug or affectation ; full of quiet humour which he frequently directed against himself. He had the gift of making others talk. "One had the conviction of being the most interesting person in the room when in conversation with him," was the description given by a contemporary ; and a young lady some fifty years his junior remembered him with adoration, "for" she said "he treated me as if I were a Queen." The diffident youth had become a man with the self-confidence of one who not only knows his work but also his own ability to accomplish it. It might equally have been written of him that :

"Many learnt from him the self-denial which is the root of all religion, the self-control which is the root of all manliness." ¹

Such was the man who, as he stood quietly behind the scenes in these years of service, gained the Queen's confidence and affection. The foundation upon which his work was built had proved enduring.

In this sketch by a novice it is not attempted to copy the style of a Rembrandt or a Kneller, with deep shadows throwing into relief the high lights. There is no Marlborough or Cromwell to portray. Compare it rather to an Elizabethan painting of a courtier—some long-forgotten Philip Sidney—a miniature in colour but without shadow. For search as we may, the shadows are not found. In all these papers collected by Her Majesty dealing with her son there is plenty of criticism, but none of it falls on Elphinstone. Her only letters to him written in annoyance we have quoted. There emerges after much reading, a man essentially sane and kindly, representative of much in the English character that is taken for granted. In his relations with Her Majesty he had certainly found that serving her was "a dedication of life rather than a contract of service." ² He may at times almost have treated her as he might a beloved aunt,

¹ Colonel Henderson on Stonewall Jackson.

² Written of Lord Stamfordham.

but there is always a sense of deep respect and devotion with never a hint of annoyance or grudging service, and never a touch of fear. He played no spectacular part, but the background to Queen Victoria is incomplete without him.

CHAPTER XLIII: SERVANTS OF THE CROWN

“ . . . The Queen would be very grateful if Sir Howard could come over tomorrow. . . . ”

The last time that he was to obey such a command was on March 6th, 1890. It was more than thirty years since Captain Elphinstone had arrived at the Castle for that solemn interview with Prince Albert; he had grown into a familiar figure there in the intervening years. Outwardly there had not been much change; he had looked older than his years at 28; at 60 he was still alert and erect without a touch of grey in his dark hair. But he had chosen to exact from himself the energy necessary for a twofold career and the strain was beginning to tell. Never very strong, he laboured also under the disadvantage of the artist which involved a continual drain upon his nervous system. He was now unwell and was just off for a few weeks' holiday. An officer at Devonport wrote, "Much against all our advice he went up to Windsor on Court business two days before he sailed. . . . He was quite unfit for so long a journey and knew it, but said he 'must go.' . . ." He called in to see Lady Ponsonby at the Norman Tower and said half laughing to Sir Henry, "Sharp work as I start tomorrow." He afterwards said he was glad to have been able to settle everything about the Duke of Connaught's children.

In these thirty years he had seen Windsor under many aspects, from the gloom of the December days in 1861 to the tumultuous joy of June 1887. He knew it when the wind whistled up the steps that scale the northern ramparts; when the snow lay deep below the walls of St. George's Chapel; when the autumn sun warmed into gold the grey stone of the Castle, and caught the mist lying among the trees of the Long Walk. He knew the Winterhalters and Vandykes in the Galleries; the miniatures in

the State drawing-rooms, the Holbeins in the library. Often had he gone to the dark private chapel where soon a new memorial would be put up on the left side of the altar, a memorial he would never see.

Windsor holds much more than is seen by the outward eye. Battlement and Tower and Bastion, Gateway, Turret and Wall, set with such assurance upon the cliff above the river, with red-roofed houses clustering happily below, what lovelier town can mind imagine? The past is about one on every side. Queen Victoria stands in formal dignity where town and castle meet, quietly greeting the new-comer. Queen Anne, with orb and sceptre, tasselled gown and dainty curl, steps down from a flowered canopy as if to drive to her newly instituted races upon Ascot Heath. King Henry and his dearly loved wife Jane lie under the fan vaulting of the chapel that was new in his time and where hang the banners of that long line of honour, begun by the Black Prince and his youthful Knights. Kings and Princes are in this chapel—where we watched a marriage celebrated at the foot of the altar steps and where one wintry day in the future would lie a Field-Marshal's baton upon a velvet cushion. Behind the physical loveliness lies the greater beauty of the spirit. Here surely is the very heart of England, the home of something very precious to the nation, not often made the subject of noise and parade, but for all that, deep in our hearts. We may say little, but once in a way in times of emergency or rejoicing we stand still for a moment looking at Windsor and know that loyalty in a noble cause is one of the most powerful forces in the world.

Here in this chapel if we are quiet we can feel around us not only the Kings and the Princes who have inspired devotion but also the humble folk who have given themselves to an ideal, men and women of the past who with no thought of self-advancement, no scheming for position and power, or wish for personal enrichment, gave a lifetime of quiet work and love to the Crown and everything for which the Crown of England stands.

So once again Elphinstone came to Windsor. He had one more talk with the Queen, discussing Prince Arthur's affairs; there was another dinner with Her Majesty and one or two members of her household; the Queen noted in her journal the next morning that she said Goodbye to Sir Howard who was going on leave to the Canary Isles with his wife and daughter; then came the journey back to Devonport and a hurried crossing

of the water to dine at Mount Edgcumbe in order to meet Mr. Vivian who, with Lady Jane and their son Harry, were to be fellow travellers the following day on S.S. *Tongarira* to Teneriffe. It was a cheerful dinner-party of congenial people ; the friendship between Elphinstone and his host stretched back through many years ; that between his wife and their fellow guests was to continue even longer in the future. Happiness seemed complete. There was no threat of serious illness, no dawning of any trouble, no menace of war to darken their thoughts ; no remote idea that the Queen had in very truth said Goodbye to Sir Howard and that tragedy, sudden and unexpected, lay ahead of them in one swift irrevocable moment that would end his life and her happiness.

Elphinstone's last action the following day before going on board was to write to the Queen enclosing some promised photographs of his daughters, a group of the three elders and one taken of the youngest in a fancy dress copied from a Vandyke at Port Eliot—a letter that was treasured by the Queen in her writing-table till her death and was then forwarded to my mother.

Then came a windy start in the voyage heading across the Bay of Biscay, the sort of rough sea that Elphinstone enjoyed. After dinner, when they neared Ushant, wanting a last breath of fresh air, he went on deck with young Harry Vivian for a quick walk. The deck was slippery with spray, there came a sudden lurch that made him lose his balance and the rubber-soled shoes he was wearing slipped under him. By some fatal negligence a section of the side railing had not been replaced after leaving harbour, and he fell to a lower deck, hitting his head before being swept overboard by a fresh roll of the ship.

In the darkness, though they searched for heart-breaking hours, they never found him.

The shock completely stunned my mother. For many years she remained numb to outside events ; her life was broken and it was long before she could see any gleam of happiness.

CHAPTER XLIV : THE QUEEN'S SORROW

THE Queen's sorrow is best told in her own words. In her Journal she wrote :

"BUCKINGHAM PALACE, 13th March.—Dear Arthur's wedding day. At half-past eleven left with Beatrice for Buckingham Palace. Soon after our arrival Dr. Reid asked to see me, which always alarms me. He said he had bad news of Sir Howard Elphinstone. I asked if he was very ill, and he said no, but that he had been drowned, swept overboard, and his body had never been recovered. The news quite stunned me. Dear Sir Howard is an awful loss, he was such a confidential devoted friend, and has been quite a father to Arthur, with whom he has been since 1859, having been chosen by beloved Albert. I am quite in despair—the whole thing haunts me."

From Windsor Castle on March 17, 1890, she wrote to my mother to meet her on her return from Teneriffe.

"DEAREST LADY ELPHINSTONE,

It is impossible to write almost—words cannot be found to express *all* I feel ! Were the distance not so great I should have wished to go at once to you to press you to my heart which is full of the deepest grief and sympathy !

I can only pray God to help you, to give you strength and courage and patience to bear this frightful blow which has struck you—more I feel I cannot say—except to repeat how dear *He* was to me and to my children—what a beloved and invaluable friend he was. My tears flow fast while I write in thinking of you *both* ! My poor Arthur loses a second Father and he owes his success in life to *Him* !

May God in his mercy help you dearest Lady Elphinstone and believe that *no* one can feel for you *more* tenderly and sympathizingly than

Your ever
affectionately and most deeply sorrowing
Victoria R & I."

On March 18th she noted in her Journal :

"... Heard from Sir John Cowell who with his wife had gone to meet poor Lady Elphinstone on her mournful return.

All Plymouth was in great sorrow about the dreadful event as dear Sir Howard had been greatly liked there. . . .

March 20th.— . . Received a telegram announcing poor Lady Elphinstone's arrival at Southampton. She had the courage to attend the memorial service at Exeter today."

A few days later Her Majesty wrote from abroad :

MAISON MOTTET, AIX-LES-BAINS,

March 27th, 1890.

" DEAREST LADY ELPHINSTONE,

It was too kind of you to think of answering my letter so soon and I wish to thank you warmly for doing so, so soon after your return. I wish also to say how constantly *you* and *He* are in my thoughts, and how this terrible catastrophe is ever present to me and *all* that you must have suffered and gone through. There are trials and shocks and sufferings which I think almost seem beyond the power of human beings to bear and *this* is one. God helped you as He alone can (undecipherable) . . . thought of your beloved Husband who was so brave, so wise, so unselfish. *He* is *near* you *still* helping you to live on for your dear children ! How I long to be able to go and see you at Pinewood, *His* creation. . . .

Dear Kind Sir Howard sent me the photographs of your dear children with a note, probably one of the last *he* ever wrote, written just before you started and which is inexpressibly precious to me !

Once more let me say from my heart which has drunk deeply of sorrow

God bless and help you,

Ever yours affectionately and sympathizingly

V.R.I.

Give my dear godchild a kiss for me."

To the Duke of Connaught who was in India she had written on the day after she heard the news :

" . . . I don't know how to begin my letter today. Oh, this is *sad, sad*, dreadful. Our dear beloved devoted friend . . . to think that he is gone and in *so* awful a manner. What I too have lost I cannot say ! Few if *any* gentlemen . . . ever were on such confidential terms with me as dear excellent Sir Howard

on the 1st of May 1852
~~having been told that~~
~~that he had been~~
 that he had been
 in England in 1852
 death!

All the time I have been
 in the hope that you
 would be able to find
 out the truth about this
 matter - as her name
 suggested she lived by
 the name of Thomas.

I am deeply sympathetic
 in the hope that Lady Elphinstone
 & her friends of her as
 well as the friends of
 Mrs. Fraser, cannot see

any more of the
 Sir. — The is expected
 as the people are ready.

was and such an impartial wise councillor and adviser you will never find again. . . .

Forgive my writing about other things today, I cannot. . . .”

A week later she wrote :

“ . . . I never remember such universal regret and sympathy. He was wonderfully beloved. As for me I cannot get over it at all ; my tears flow often when I hear more or think of it. I get haunted by the horrible end, tho’ please God ! he was unconscious before he reached the sea !

I hope to hear a great deal more about the whole catastrophe from the Cowells today. . . .”

Her sorrow is shown in a note to her from the Duchess of Roxburghe, written the day after the news had become known, saying :

“ . . . I durst not speak to Your Majesty last night for I knew how terribly Your Majesty was suffering. . . .”

To my mother the Queen sent copies of letters she received from her family, who wrote also to my mother herself. The Duke of Connaught from Colombo said :

“ . . . In your beloved husband I have lost a trusted friend and counsellor such as I can never find again in this world. I can never forget how much I owe him and it is only now when he is lost to me that it is brought home to me how much I loved him. I cannot bear to think that I shall never see his kind face again and I dread to look forward to the blank I shall find when I get home. It feels such selfishness on my part talking of myself in the midst of all *your* grief.”

From Berlin came many letters. The Empress Frederick wrote :

BERLIN, *March 22.*

“ . . . I have begun so many letters to you but have torn them all up ! My tears flow fast while I am writing. . . . *What* our dear Sir Howard was to *me* and *how* I shall ever miss him ! I am sure you feel and know this, and how I appreciated his character and talents and what confidence I felt in him ! . . . *How* fond *my* beloved one was of dear Sir Howard, how bright a smile used to pass over his face when he saw your Husband !”

The announcement of Elphinstone's death in the Court Journal was written, not by a secretary, but by the Queen herself, and must have been the work of more than a few spare moments. With the gracious permission of His Majesty we are allowed to reproduce her draft :

BUCKINGHAM PALACE,

14 March 1890.

"The Queen received yesterday with profound grief the terrible news of the untimely death of Sir Howard Elphinstone.

Sir Howard ^{enjoyed} } Her Majesty's entire confidence, esteem
 ^{possessed} }
 and friendship for 31 years and had been selected by the Prince Consort as Governor to H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught when the Prince was only 8½.

The Queen and still more the Duke of Connaught have lost a dear valued and most devoted friend to whom the latter could always turn for wise advice and counsel.

The lamented General who was a very distinguished officer and most accomplished man, visited Her Majesty on the 6th at Windsor and took leave of the Queen on the morning of the 7th, having told Her that he would be back in England in 3 weeks !

All the Royal Family unite with the Queen in deeply deploring Sir H. Elphinstone's loss—as he was greatly respected and beloved by all of them.

The deepest sympathy is felt for Lady Elphinstone and news of her as well as particulars of the most tragic event are anxiously looked for. She is expected at Plymouth on Tuesday."

CHAPTER XLV: THE GARDEN AGAIN

ONE warm day in the summer of 1938 a large car with chauffeur and footman in royal livery waited in my mother's drive ; the Duke of Connaught had come with a friend to see her and her garden.

My mother was now 82 ; she had been seriously ill and was not supposed to walk more than a few yards ; but doctor's orders counted little with her—nothing at all where the garden was

concerned—and presently we were all strolling across the lawn with the Prince. The well-known soldierly figure stooped slightly now; he was within two years of 90, but his kindness and courtesy were unchanged. He told us with pride that he had just accomplished seventy years of service in the army—seventy years since Queen Victoria told my father that she had “signed Prince Arthur’s commission with much pleasure”—it was 150 years, he said, since his godfather was gazetted Ensign Arthur Wellesley—no mean record of service for two lives.

The garden that day was at the height of its glory. It had altered with fifty years of my mother’s work; the patterned flower-beds were gone, deodars and Wellingtonias gave place to liquidambar and magnolia, camellias, allspice and abutilon; the paths were no longer of gravel bordered with pottery, but of close-clipped grass. Crimson, purple and palest pink rhododendron became a background to the figures of the Duke and my mother as they wandered among the shrubs, comparing plant with plant or bloom with bloom, connoisseurs going over familiar ground. They went across the heather to see how one of his recent gifts, a Himalayan blue Pine, was growing; they discussed the removal of a low branch of another Pinus, that huge Insignis, planted by her fifty years ago in imitation of those at Osborne; they each vaunted the superlative beauty of their own plants. She could not rival his azaleas; it would be hard to find the equal of her mimosa or pernettya.

When they reached the top of a rough and narrow path cut through the heather leading steeply down to the roses the Duke hesitated. “I think I should like an arm,” he said. Before either his companion or I could get to him my mother had slipped her arm under his and the two old friends were zig-zagging uncertainly down the slope, each intent that the other should walk in the fairway. In an agony of suspense we followed, till they reached the foot of the hill and entered in safety the quiet haven of the rose garden.

Later that day when the evening sun flooded the drawing-room and my mother and I sat by the open window, I realised as never before how the room held in it the history of my father’s life.

On the table at my side the sun struck sparks of exotic colouring from two pieces of enamel, one of them being a jewelled bracelet from the City of Jaipur. The light fell past a carved chest from Genoa on which stood some photographs with

crowns upon their frames, past a long glass case hanging on the wall full on to one of the marquetry doors, showing up the intricate details of arabesque as if with a magnifying-glass. Beside it, above that inlaid ebony and ivory piece they had first sighted in a Seville street, was a sketch of Potsdam, and beyond—glowing in the full golden light—was an ethereal water-colour of Alpine snows sketched many years ago on a walking tour with the boy prince. I picked up the second piece of enamel that lay by my hand—an eighteenth-century Eikon—and looked at the curious saints depicted upon it; it had belonged to his parents a hundred years ago in far-away Livonia and perhaps even came from the Empress Catherine herself.

Life had brought to my mother many lovely things and wonderful moments. One joy had been denied her—that of a son; one overwhelming blow had struck her when in the fullness of happiness. But the long sunset had gradually become very beautiful and there was another generation growing up fully alive to the tradition of service that lay embodied in the glass case hanging on the wall, a glass case that contained a sword, some stars and orders and among a long row of shining medals with coloured ribbons one dark bronze cross bearing the words

“FOR VALOUR”



INDEX

- Albany, Duke of, *see* Leopold, Prince.
 Albany, Duchess of, 232.
 Albert, Prince Consort, 1, 5, 24;
 interview with 26; 29, 31, 32;
 photographs of 33; makes a
 snow man 36; 38; dealings with
 Elphinstone 43-46; death 46-
 47; referred to 48, 64, 65, 257.
 Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, King
 Edward VII, 36, 38; relations
 with his mother 41-43; 46, 47,
 65, 76, 77, 85, 90, 93; in Paris
 97; 134; illness 141; 145, 147;
 racing 148-150; 161; in Vienna
 167-168; in Russia 170; in
 Berlin 188; at wedding 204; at
 German manoeuvres 226; at
 Emperor Frederick's funeral 244.
 Albert Victor, Prince (Eddy), 186.
 Aldershot, 35, 44, 45, 91, 97, 98, 135,
 136, 150, 160, 161, 178-182;
 186, 219.
 Alexander II, Emperor of Russia, 156,
 170-173.
 Alexander, Prince, *see* Battenberg.
 Alexandra, Princess of Wales and
 Queen, 60, 65, 77, 120, 139; in
 Russia 170; at Emperor Freder-
 ick's funeral, 243.
 Alfonso, Don, of Portugal, 207.
 Alfred, Prince, Duke of Edinburgh,
 24; in Navy 30; 36, 65, 70, 87,
 95, 134, 135, 145, 148, 157,
 166; marriage 170; 173; at
 Prince Arthur's wedding 204.
 Alice, Princess, Grand Duchess of
 Hesse-Darmstadt, 32, 38, 47, 68,
 83; visits hospital 86; 153, 154,
 161; death of 199 and 201; 227.
 Alice, Princess, Countess of Athlone,
 223, 232.
 Amélie, Princess of Saxe-Coburg, 162,
 163.
 Ampthill, Lord, 189, 190, 196, 198;
 death 227, 228.
 Anstruther, Sir Ralph and Lady, 18
 19, 20.
 Anstruther, Sir Ralph, 6th Bart.,
 18, 180.
 Arthur, Prince, Duke of Connaught,
 1, 3-5; childhood 24 etc.; at
 death of his father 49-50; edu-
 cation 52-59; Woolwich exam.
 53, 92-96; in Germany 60-70;
 travels 71-83; in France 96-99;
 Garter and muffiteers 94-95; at
 Royal Military Academy 95-96;
 small-pox 99-103; at Chatham
 106; in Canada with the Rifle
 Brigade 111-132; A.D.C. to Lord
 Alexander Russell 129; accident
 137-140; created Duke of
 Connaught 145; helps save the
 Queen 147; to German manœu-
 vres and wedding 163-164; to
 Rome and Vienna 165-169;
 commands Rifle Brigade in Dub-
 lin 186; engagement 188-201;
 marriage 201-205; wedding tour
 205-210; commands Guards in
 Egypt 221-222; in India 223-
 225; in Germany 226-227; in
 command at Bombay 245-250;
 sorrow at Elphinstone's death
 261-262; in 1938 263-264.
 Ascot, 148-149.
 Athens, 209-210.
 Augusta, German Empress, 67, 93,
 170; evening party 199; 201;
 unkindness 229-231; evening
 dress 233; discusses General
 Gordon 234; 244.
 Austria, Emperor of, 167, 168.
 Bagshot, 45, 210-214.
 Bagshot Park, 4, 204, 205, 211, 212,
 213, 223, 238, 247.
 Balcaskie, 18, 19, 180.
 Balfour, Gerald, 2nd Earl of, 175,
 185.
 Battenberg, Prince Alexander of, 229,
 230, 236, 239.
 Battenberg, Prince Henry of, 236-237.
 Battenberg, Princess Henry of, *see*
 Beatrice, Princess.
 Battenberg, Prince Louis of (Mar-
 quess of Milford Haven), 206,
 208, 230.
 Battenberg, Princess Louis of (Mar-
 chioness of Milford Haven), 86,
 227.
 Bayeux, 98, 99.

- Beaconsfield, Earl of, 189, 193, 203.
 Beatrice, Princess Henry of Battenberg, 38, 44, 76, 156, 163, 176, 212, 221, 260.
 Becker, 36, 38.
 Belhaven, Lord, 180.
 Bell Professor, 215.
 Berlin, 152, 154, 170, 188-201, 232-239, 243, 244, 262.
 Bernhard, Prince, of Saxe-Meiningen, 66, 69, 71, 188.
 Biddulph, Sir Thomas, 27, 35, 47, 102, 112, 135, 215.
 Bismarck, Prince, 65, 151, 229, 237, 239, 241, 245.
 Bligh, Ivo, 8th Earl of Darnley, 185.
 Bombay, 224, 225, 245.
 Bosahan, 255.
 Boston, 125, 126, 129.
 Bramshill, 179, 180.
 Brenner Countess, 160.
 Breslau, 159.
 Brown, John, 33, 107, 147-148, 182.
 Bruce, General the Hon. R., 27, 36, 41, 47, 134.
 Buffalo, 111, 116.
 Bulgaria, 229, 239.
 Burden, Mr. (Gardener), 251.
 Burgoyne, Sir John, 24, 106, 152.
- Cambridge, Duke of, 65, 93; in Paris 97; 118; on Balkan appointment 177; on Mauritius 216.
 Cambridge University, 41, 42.
 Canada, 111-132.
 Carberry, 19.
 Cartier, Sir George 130.
 Catherine Empress of Russia, 7, 8, 9, 10, 265.
 Châlons, 97, 98.
 Chamonix, 74, 75.
 Charlotte, Princess of Prussia, 188, 190.
 Chatham, 16, 106.
 Childers, Rt. Hon. H., 217.
 Christian, Prince, of Schleswig-Holstein, 87, 104; at ball 137-138; 140, 214.
 Christian, Helena, Princess, 4, 47, 87, 95, 104, 139.
 Clarendon, 4th Earl of, 111.
 Clark, Sir James, 47.
 Clifton Castle, 105.
 Coblenz, 67, 76, 231.
 Coburg, 47, 60-70.
 Coburg, Duke of, 65, 97, 162.
- Cole, Alfred, 179, 184, 248.
 Cole, the family, 183, 184, 185.
 Collins, 52, 68, 75, 100-101, 105, 138.
 Cologne, 230.
 Connaught, Duke of, *see* Arthur, Prince.
 Connaught, Prince Arthur of, 254.
 Connaught, Louise Margaret, Duchess of, 188; engagement 190-201; marriage 201-205; wedding tour 205-210; her husband in Egypt 221-222; 224; in Germany 227; in India 248, 249.
 Connaught, Princess Margaret of, 221, 248, 254.
 Connaught, Princess Victoria Patricia of, 238, 247-250.
 Constantine, King of Greece, 209.
 Cowell, Sir John, 22; with Prince Alfred 24; 26, 27, 35, 37-38; his wedding 105; 123, 170-172, 254, 260, 262.
 Cowell, Lady, 105, 175, 260, 262.
 Cowley, Earl, 77, 97.
 Crimea, 22, 24.
 Crown Prince, *see* Frederick, German Emperor.
 Crown Princess, *see* Victoria, Princess Royal.
 Crystal Palace, 55, 56.
 Cust, Sir Lionel, 185.
- Darmstadt, 66, 152, 154, 165, 227, 229.
 Denbies, 179.
 Derby, 14th Earl of, 4, 104.
 Devonport, 254-258.
 Disraeli, Rt. Hon. B., *see* Beaconsfield.
 Dolgourouki, Princess Catherine, 157.
 Dover, 102, 103, 142.
 Dowell, Admiral Sir William, 255.
 Dublin, 186-188.
 Du Plat, Colonel, 46, 47, 59, 61, 63.
 Durnford, Lt., R.E., 16.
 Dymoke, Lady, 10, 14, 15, 18.
- Edinburgh, 16-21.
 Edinburgh, Duke and Duchess of, *see* Alfred and Marie.
 Effingham, Howard, Earl of, 9, 10.
 Egerton, Sir Alfred and Lady, 206, 209.
 Egypt, 220-222, 228.

- Elphinstone, Alexander (father), 11-13, 75, 92.
- Elphinstone, Amelia (mother), 11-14, 51, 75, 92, 174.
- Elphinstone, Annie Frances, Lady (wife), 2, 3, 83, 175; marriage 177; "trousseau chemise" 181; birth of first daughter 182; at Prince Arthur's wedding 203; letters on wedding tour 206-209; birth of second daughter 213; third daughter 217; Christmas in Berlin 235-236; at Portofino 239-241; in India 245-250; birth of fourth daughter 250; in her garden 263-265.
- Elphinstone, Arthur, Lord Balmerino, 7.
- Elphinstone's children: Victoria 182, 223, 259; Irene 213, 223, 259; Olive 217, 223, 259; Mary 250, 259.
- Elphinstone's family, 8-13.
- Elphinstone, Sir Howard, 1-5; youth 11-15; in Scotland 16-20; gains V.C. at Sebastopol 23; appointed to Court 24-33; sympathy with the Queen 48-52; at Greenwich 52-59; takes Prince Arthur to Germany 60-70; to Switzerland 70-76; to Mediterranean and Holy Land 76-83; awarded C.B. 79; tact 84-89; spelling 89; visits France 96-99; nurses the Prince 99-103; has operation 105; promoted Lt.-Col. 106; takes house at Lucerne 107-109; balls at Greenwich 109-110; in Canada 111-132; his art 122 and 73; letter to Cowell 123-125; oyster dinner 127; awarded C.M.G. 132; suggests leaving 133-136; at Aldershot 135-150; made K.C.B. 136; nurses the Prince 137-140; tact with the Queen 140-150; at Dover 142; escorts Prince Arthur abroad 150-174; describes North Sea 158; ball at Breslau 159; goes to Rome, Vienna and Russia 165-174; engagement 174; marriage 177; commands troops and companies, Aldershot 178; to Ireland 186; to Germany for Prince's engagement 188-201; to Potsdam 193-195; at Prince's wedding 201-205; on wedding tour, 205-210; service at Osborne 215; exchange with Gordon 215-217; C.R.E. at Vine Cottage 217-220; decorates R.E. theatre 218; at German manoeuvres 230; Military Attaché at Berlin 232-237; at Portofino 239-241; at Emperor Frederick's funeral 242-245; painting in India 245-250; at Pinewood 250-254; Major-General 254; in command at Devonport 254-259; last visit to Windsor 257; death 259.
- Elphinstone, Colonel J., 19.
- Elphinstone, Nicolai, 174, 183.
- Elphinstone, Rosalie, 11-15, 18-20.
- Ely, Marchioness of, 28, 37, 38, 175.
- Eton College, 28, 34.
- Eugénie, Empress of the French, 77, 97, 161.
- Ewing, Mrs., 180.
- Exeter, 261.
- Fetherstonhaugh, Miss, 179.
- Fillmore, Millard, ex President of the United States, 117.
- Fish, Mr., 124.
- Fitzgerald, Knight of Kerry, 158.
- Fitzroy, Lord Charles, afterwards 7th Duke of Grafton, 104.
- Frederick, Crown Prince, afterwards German Emperor: first meeting with 34-35; 153, 163, 167; lunch at Vine Cottage 186; 189, 190; appointed Regent 192; 196; views on education 200; at Prince Arthur's wedding 204; 227; at Portofino 239-241; his ideals for Germany, illness and death 241-245.
- Frederick Charles, Prince of Prussia, 154, 188, 189, 190, 196; at Prince Arthur's wedding 204-205; 231.
- Frederick, Empress, *see* Victoria Princess Royal.
- Frogmore, 46, 139, 244.
- Galt, Sir A., 130.
- Gibbs, F. W., 43.
- Gifford's Hall, 176-178, 183.
- Gladstone Rt. Hon W. E., 45, 111, 112, 141, 217, 218.
- Glienick, 191, 192, 195.

- Gordon, General Charles, 4, 22, 76, 96; in Mauritius 216-217; 218, 234.
- Gosset, Lt., R.E., 16.
- Gotha, 60, 62, 152.
- Grant, General U., President of the United States, 124, 125.
- Grant, Mrs., 124, 125.
- Granville, Earl, 111, 112, 136.
- Greenwich, 52.
- Grey, Gen. the Hon. Charles, 27, 28, 37, 38, 47, 69, 104, 128.
- Grey, Albert, afterwards 4th Earl, 28, 59.
- Halifax, Nova Scotia, 114, 115, 118.
- Hanover, King of, 159, 160.
- Harding, General, 224.
- Hare, Mary, 123, 180.
- Harrison, Sir Richard, 108, 109.
- Hart-Davies, Col., 180.
- Harz Mountains, 61.
- Helena, Princess Christian, 4, 47, 87, 95, 104, 139.
- Hesse-Darmstadt, Grand Duke of, 97, 202, 218, 219, 229.
- Hesse-Darmstadt, Grand Duchess, *see* Alice, Princess.
- Hesse-Darmstadt, Princess Alexandra, *see* Russia.
- Hesse-Darmstadt, Princess Elizabeth, Grand Duchess Serge, 228, 229, 231.
- Hesse-Darmstadt, Princess Victoria, *see* Battenberg.
- Hocidé, Madame, 39, 43.
- Holy Land, 80-82.
- Hunter-Weston, Sir Aylmer, 180.
- Imperial, the Prince, 77, 97; in camp 161-162.
- India, 231, 245-250, 252.
- Ireland, 186-188.
- Italy, Royal Family of, 165.
- Itchel Manor, 180.
- Jacobi, 122, 178.
- Jelf, family, 180.
- Jenkinson, Francis, 185.
- Jenner, Sir William, 47, 69, 101, 102, 139, 140, 253.
- Jerusalem, 80.
- Jolley, Mr., tutor to Prince Arthur, 26; 31, 39, 52, 53, 56, 57; illness 68; 71, 72, 74, 76, 86, 88; good work 92.
- Jones, Sir Harry, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 40, 86.
- Jordan river, 80.
- Kalamaki Bay, aqueduct, 82.
- Kent, the Duchess of, 33-35, 38, 40; death of 45; 46.
- Keppel, Lt.-Col., 36, 37, 41.
- Kerr, Lord and Lady Frederick, 180.
- Kienthal, hut at, 73.
- Kipling, Lockwood, 247, 253.
- Kruse, Admiral, 9-11.
- Kruse, Catherine, 10.
- Laking, Sir Francis, 253, 254.
- Lane, Sir Ronald, 221.
- Leiningen, Feodore, Princess, 47.
- Lemprière, Colonel, 207.
- Leopold, Duke of Albany, 4, 25, 29; illness 30; 31, 34, 36, 38, 39, 43; in France 48-50; 59, 65, 85, 147, 163, 176; death of 231.
- Leopold I, King of the Belgians, 67.
- Livonia Cottage, 11-15.
- Lobach, Amelia (Elphinstone), 11-14, 51, 75, 92; death 174.
- Lobach, Billy and Auguste, 14.
- London, Canada, 118.
- Longman, George, 185.
- Lorne, Marquess of, afterwards 9th Duke of Argyll, 181.
- Lort-Phillips, 180.
- Loseley, 180.
- Louise, Princess, Duchess of Argyll, 4, 25, 32, 38; brooch for 55; 108, 181.
- Lucerne, 71, 108, 109.
- Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred, 175, 185.
- Lyttelton, Hon. and Rev. Edward, 185.
- McClintock, Admiral Sir Leopold, 57.
- MacLagan, 17, 18.
- McNeill, Sir John, 221, 222.
- Malet, Sir Edward, 233.
- Malta, 79, 80.
- Margaret, Princess, of Connaught, 221, 248, 253, 254.
- Marie, Grand Duchess of Russia, Duchess of Edinburgh, 153, 157, 166, 170.
- Marlborough House, 77, 90.
- Masters Smith, Mrs., 15.
- Maud, Princess, Queen of Norway, 120.

- Mauritius, 215-217.
 Mediterranean, 76-83, 205-210.
 Meissonier, 238.
 Middleton, 9th Viscount, 179.
 Minoru, Prince of Wales' horse, 150.
 Moltke, Field-Marshal von, 226.
 Montreal, 111, 118, 119, 127, 129, 130.
 Moscow, 173, 174.
 Mount Edgcumbe, 4th Earl of, 259.

 Napoleon III, Emperor of the French, 77, 97.
 New York, 123-127, 129.
 Normandy, 98, 99.

 O'Connor, Arthur, 147.
 Orloff, Count, 8, 9.
 Ottawa, 118, 122, 125.

 Palestine, 76, 80-82.
 Palmerston, Viscount, 45, 79.
 Paris, 77, 96-97.
 Patricia, Princess (Lady Patricia Ramsay), 238, 247-250.
 Peabody, Mr., funeral of, 125.
 Peper-Harow, 179.
 Perponcher, Count, 232.
 Phipps, Sir Charles, 27, 47, 68, 69, 92; death of 84.
 Pickard Major, V.C.: first meeting with Prince Arthur 87; 89, 95, 96; praise of 99; nurses Prince Arthur 100-101; 107, 108, 113, 118, 131, 132, 137, 138, 154.
 Pinewood, Bagshot, 2, 3, 214, 250-254, 263-265.
 Plymouth, 45, 261.
 Ponsonby, Sir Henry, 203, 224, 225, 244, 257.
 Poona, 246-247; 250.
 Port Eliot, 255, 259.
 Portofino, 239-241.
 Portsmouth, 45, 215.
 Portugal, King and Queen of, 206, 207.
 Portugal, Don Alfonso of, 207.
 Potsdam, 190, 191, 193-196, 237.

 Quebec, 118, 129.

 Radolinski, 232.
 Raglan, 1st Baron, 44.
 Ranger's House, 52-110.
 Rawal Pindi, 224, 225.

 Reid, Sir James, 260.
 Rennell of Rodd, Lord, 233.
 Rheinhartsbrunn, 61.
 Rifle Brigade, the: in Canada 111, 121, 129; 186, 218.
 Roberts, Field-Marshal Earl, 224.
 Rome, 148, 165.
 Roorkee, 224.
 Rosenau, the, 63, 66-70.
 Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, 53, 86, 92-95, 133.
 Ruland, Mr., 34, 46, 47.
 Russell, 1st Earl, 82.
 Russell, Lord Alexander, 129.
 Russell, Lord Odo, Baron Amptill, 189, 190, 196, 198, 227, 228.
 Russia, Tsarevitch of, 171.
 Russia, Tsaritsa of, 171, 173, 228.

 St. Petersburg, 170-173.
 Sandford, Mrs., 20.
 Schleswig-Holstein, 65, 67.
 Schouvaloff, Count, 166.
 Scott, Sir Charles, 233.
 Sebastopol, 1, 23.
 Seckendorff, Count, 194, 227, 238, 239, 243, 244.
 Serge, Grand Duke, of Russia, 229.
 Seymour, General, 47, 72-76, 204.
 Seymour, Lord and Lady William, 180.
 Sherman, General, 125.
 Sidmouth, 11, 92.
 Silesia, 161, 163-165.
 Smyth, Piazzi, 17.
 Spiridow, Admiral, 8, 9.
 Stanley, Lady Augusta, 66, 175.
 Stanley, Dean, 76, 175.
 Stockmar, Baron, 63, 64.
 Stopford, Hon. Horatia, 37, 38.
 Swaine, Colonel, afterwards General Sir L., 228.
 Switzerland, 71-76, 88, 107-109.

 Taormina, 78, 207.
 Tchesme, battle of, 9, 10.
 Tel-el-Kebir, 222.
 Thornton, Mr., Minister at Washington, 111, 123-127.
 Thornton, Mrs., 124.
 Toronto, 118.
 Tunis, Bey of, 78, 79, 132.

 United States of America, 111, 116, 117, 123-130.
 Up Park, 179.

Venice, 237, 238.

Victoria, Queen, 1; letters 3-5; memorandum 25; dances a reel 28; at Christmas 38; letter of thanks 39-40; extends Elphinstone's appointment 50-51; in Germany 60-64; Coburg dilemma 64-70; interest in travels 71-83; Prince Arthur's examination 92-96; at Lucerne 108-109; says Goodbye before Canada 113; anxious to retain Elphinstone 133-136; horror at accident 138; criticism of Prince Arthur 141-146; attempt on life of 147; letter on Sir Howard's engagement 175; godmother to his daughter 182; at Prince Arthur's wedding 204-205; on Prince Arthur in Egypt 220-222; on Prince Arthur in India 222-225; indignation with Empress Augusta 229-231; distress for Crown Princess 242-244; with her grandchildren 253-254; says goodbye to Sir Howard 258; sorrow at his death 260-263.

Queen Victoria's views on: heat and fresh air 29-30; scripture lessons 39; the Prince of Wales 41-43; sympathy 51; religious education 57; theatricals 59; John Bullism 58-71; Baron Stockmar 64; good air 69; manners 83-89 and 142-145; Highlanders 84; Aldershot 91; trouser pockets 95; sailing 102; Fenian outrages 103-105; heat 106; on taking a house 107; duties of a Prince 112; Windsor Park 140; amusements 146; racing 148-150; eligible Princesses 153, 155-157; overbearing Germans 163-165; gaiety 165-168; Royal houses 205; Woods and Forest dept. 212; heraldry 213; duty of a wife 224; her granddaughters' engagements 229-230; whooping-cough 253.

Victoria, Princess Royal, Empress

Frederick, 4; her art 32; 34, 35; war news 86; 93, 94; assembles Princesses 154; 156; letter to Queen Victoria 188; asks Elphinstone's help 193; artistic taste 194-195; collection of antiques 199; chooses presents 200; attitude to Germany 201; on von Moltke 226; lunch at Vine cottage, 227; distress at Lord Ampthill's death 228; invitation cards 232; kindness to the Elphinstones 234-236; on Battenberg engagement 236-239; at Portofino 239-241; death of her husband 241-245; on Sir Howard's death 262.

Victoria, Princess Louis of Battenberg, 86, 227.

Victoria, Princess, of Prussia, 229, 236-239.

Vienna, 136, 164, 167-169.

Vivian, Mr., Lady Jane and Harry, 259.

Wales, Prince and Princess of, *see* Albert Edward and Alexandra.

Washington, 111, 123-127.

Waterer, Mr., 45.

Wellington, 1st Duke of, 24, 65, 264; statue of, 186, 219.

William I, German Emperor: at ball 159; 164, 170, 189; attempted assassination 191; at theatre 198; at party 199; 201; courtesy 226; 229; faints 230; 234, 239; death 241; 244.

William II, German Emperor: his education 94; behaviour to his mother 242-243.

Williamson, Miss, 20.

Wolseley, F. M. Viscount, 216, 222, 228.

Wood, Mr., Consul-General at Tunis, 79.

Woolwich (Royal Military Academy), 53, 86, 92-95, 133.

Young, Sir John, 111, 118, 119, 121, 132

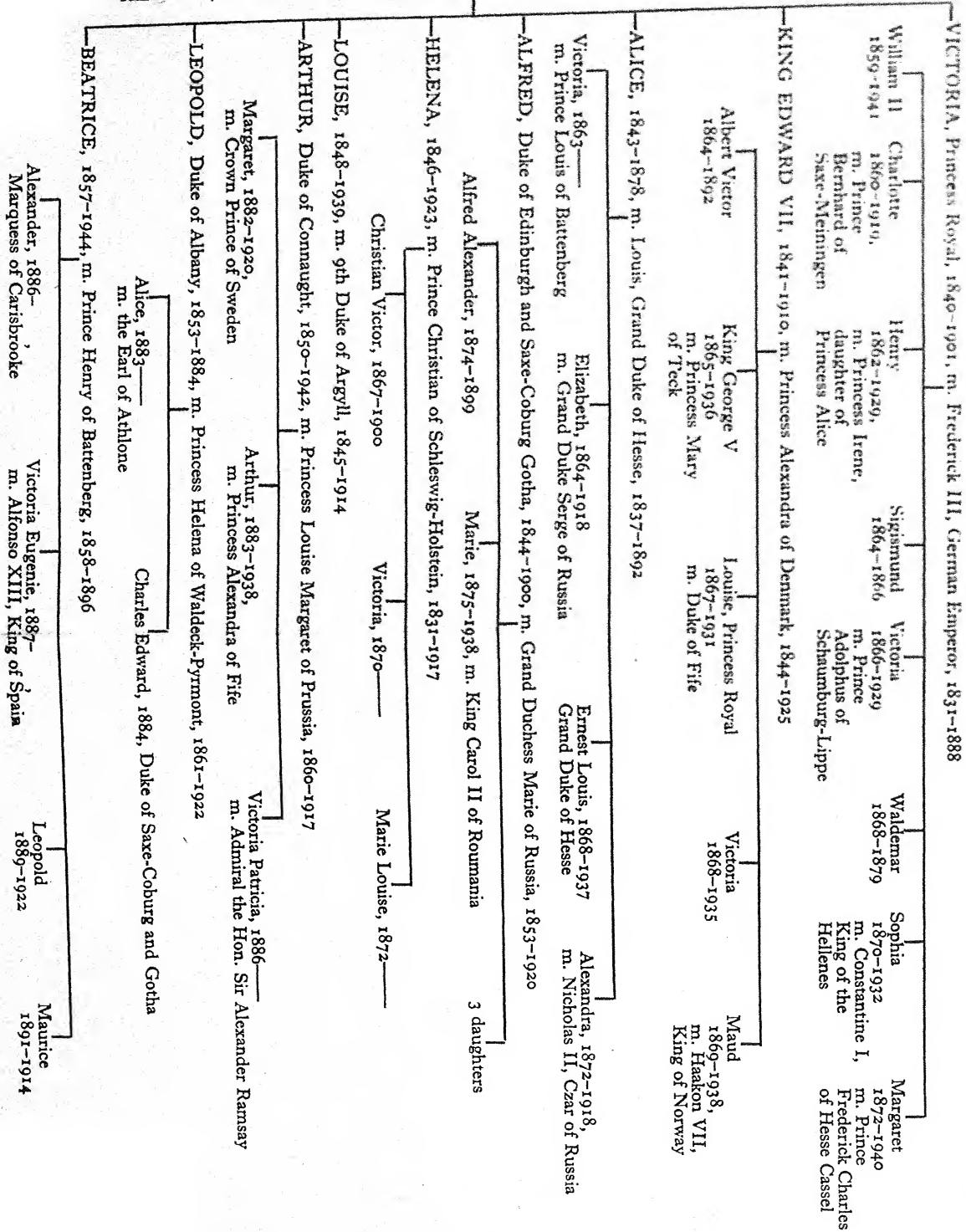
Young, Lady, 118, 119, 121.

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